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THURSDAY JANUARY 9, 2020

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Threat shuts down school

Kagman High School went on lockdown yesterday morning after an anonymous perpetrator sent an email to the school's principal threatening a shootout. The case remains under investigation.



By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA

he Public School System does not take shooting threats lightly, said Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada yesterday, and the punish-

ment for that transgression, if he or she is a student, includes possible expulsion.

This comes soon after Kagman High School received an email threat yesterday morn-

"Email threat perpetrator could face expulsion"

ing about a shooting incident around noon later that day. that will happen at the school. The school was placed on lockdown as police investigated; the lockdown was lifted

In a short interview with Ada yesterday, he said that PSS is considering the email as a Category 1 threat in terms

of severity, one being the most severe and, depending on the outcome of the investigation being done by the Department

See THREAT on Page 4

PSS budget cut a 'miscommunication'

By KIMBERLY A. BAUTISTA kimberly_bautista@saipantribune.com REPORTER

A reported request from the Office of the Governor to slash the Public School System's budget by another 50% is now being characterized as a "miscommunication" between the central government and Education Commissioner Dr. Alfred Ada.

At the continuation of a meeting of the Board of Education's Fiscal. Personnel and Administration Committee yesterday, Ada clarified that See PSS on Page 4

Plane crashes near Iran's capital, killing 176 By MOHAMMAD NASIRI, NASSER KARIMI and

JON GAMBRELL ASSOCIATED PRESS

SHAHEDSHAHR, Iran (AP)—A Ukrainian airplane carrying 176 people crashed on Wednesday shortly after takeoff from Tehran's main airport, killing all onboard, Iranian

state TV and officials in Ukraine said.

The plane had taken off from Imam Khomeini International Airport in the Iranian capital when a fire struck one of its engines, said Qassem Biniaz, a spokesman for Iran's Road and Transportation Ministry. The pilot of the aircraft then lost control of the plane, send-

See PLANE on Page 4

ocal vendors owed from \$20K to \$300K now fully p

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE ferdie delatorre@saipantribune.com

Imperial Pacific International

terday that they recently in-

(CNMI) LLC disclosed yes- outstanding payment requests of vendors. To date, they have creased the number of employ- paid off all local vendors with as a result of increasing the

\$20,000 to \$300,000.

IPI said in a statement that, ees that handle the clearing of outstanding payments from number of staff, "significant

audit and clearing of payment requests.

IPI said they are working

progress" has been made on on an audit of the remaining payment requests. IPI said the two payment requests over See IPI on Page 4

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Marianas Creations Café held its first Christmas Shot competition last month.





NATION

President Donald Trump backs away from his threats to target Iranian cultural sites.

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WORLD

Iran fires ballistic missiles at two military bases in Iraq housing American troops.

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SCAN ME WITH A COMPATIBLE **QR READER TO KEEP UPDATED** ON ALL THE LATEST NEWS.



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Local

Officer's motion to dismiss traffic charges against himself is denied

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE REPORTER

Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo has denied police officer Dixon Kwon's motion to dismiss several traffic charges filed against him over a 2017 car crash on As Gonno Highway that resulted in serious injuries to his then-girlfriend, who was his passenger.

In an order yesterday, Govendo also ruled that the Department of Public Safety acted in bad faith when police officer Olympio Muna lost the internal investigation case file and police officer Alexander Sakisat discarded the audio records, because the finding's potential exculpatory value was apparent at the time they were lost or destroyed.

However, Govendo said, Kwon can obtain comparable evidence by other reasonably available means.

Exculpatory evidence refers to evidence favorable to the defendant in a criminal case that tends to exonerate the defendant of guilt.

The judge said to warrant dismissal, lost or destroyed evidence "must be of such a nature that the defendant would be unable to obtain comparable evidence by other reasonably available means."

Govendo disagreed with Kwon's argu- Govendo ment that he would

be unable to obtain comparable evidence because everything from the investigation is lost or destroyed, and a cross-examination of the officers would not recreate the DPS Internal Affairs Unit's investigation or the favorable findings.

Govendo said Kwon declares but does not explain how a cross-examination could not produce favorable findings.

The judge said Kwon could use the internal investigation's findings to impeach the officers, to question the breathalyzer results, and to suppress any statements he made.

Govendo said that Muna had testified that he discovered inconsistent information whether police officer Melvin Cadigan properly read Kwon his Miranda rights.

Miranda refers to the U.S. Supreme Court's landmark ruling that concludes that statements made by a suspect in police custody are generally inadmissible if the suspect has not been made aware of his or her Fifth and Sixth Amendment rights.

Govendo said Sakisat testified that police officer Peter Aldan declared that Kwon signed a form refusing to acknowledge his constitutional rights, even though Kwon had not signed the form.

"Nothing prevents Dixon Kwon from cross-examining officers Muna, Sakisat, Aldan, and Cadigan about these inconsistencies," the judge pointed out.

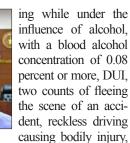
Furthermore, he said, any statements in violation of a defendant's Miranda rights can be suppressed.

The court therefore finds that even though Dixon Kwon may be unable to recreate the internal investigation, he can obtain comparable evidence through other reasonably available means." Govendo said.

Police said Kwon was driving on July 22, 2017, when his vehicle ran off the road on As Gonno Highway and hit a tree, causing serious injuries to his passenger, Deedra Santos.

When the officers responded to the area, Kwon was reportedly not at the scene, but Santos was there. Kwon was an offduty officer who was "driving under the influence" at the time of the accident.

Kwon was arrested and subsequently charged with driv-



vehicle liability insurance while operating a vehicle on a public highway, and failure to have motor vehicle liability insurance in possession while operating a vehicle on a public highway.

failure to have motor

Kwon is still employed with

Last March 12, Govendo ordered the government to provide Kwon with any favorable evidence derived from the DPS internal investigation of police conduct during Kwon's arrest.

Specifically, Govendo ordered the government to provide Kwon with the DPS Internal Affairs Unit's reports/notes and audio recordings from its investigation into police misconduct.

Six days after the judge's order, the Commonwealth informed the court that DPS diligently searched for the materials but did not find them because Muna lost the notes/reports and Sakisat discarded the interview audio recordings. As a result, Kwon, through counsel Charity R. Hodson, moved to dismiss the charges against him.

Govendo heard Kwon's motion to dismiss last Nov. 29. Assistant attorney general Jonathan Robert Glass Jr., counsel for the government, opposed the motion.

Kwon asked the court to dismiss this case because the Commonwealth failed to produce the notes/reports and audio recordings from DPS' internal investigation, and because the court found in its previous order that those notes/reports and recordings favored him.

In the order yesterday denying Kwon's motion to dismiss. Govendo said if the lost or destroyed evidence is only "potentially useful evidence," failure to preserve it does not violate due process "unless a criminal defendant can show bad faith on the part of the police."

In this case, the judge said, DPS lost or destroyed potentially useful evidence, so Kwon must show that DPS acted in bad faith in failing to preserve the evidence and that the exculpatory value of the evidence was apparent before its destruction.

Govendo said Kwon must also show that the nature of the evidence was such that Kwon would be unable to obtain comparable evidence by other reasonably available means.







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By IVA MAURIN and

JUSTINE NAUTA

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com justine_nauta@saipantribune.com REPORTERS

In anticipation of the CNMI hosting the Pacific Mini Games in 2021, the Office of the Governor has identified the rebuilding of the Oleai Sports Complex as a priority.

According to press secretary Kevin Bautista, the Torres administration is currently in negotiation with the Pacific Games Council in hosting the Pacific Mini Games in 2021, which would require the rebuilding and reconstruction of sports facilities that are conducive to hosting a large number of athletes from around the region.

"The sports complex is a huge priority for the administration," said Bautista. "We've made the commitment that we are going to continue hosting the Pacific Mini Games in coordination with the PGC."

The Oleai Sports Complex consists of the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium, the Francisco "Tan Ko" Palacios Ballfield, the Miguel "Tan Ge" Basa Pangelinan Ballfield, and the track and field facility and grandstand.

Bautista said that renovating the sports complex is one of the top projects of the Office of Planning and Development and the Office of the Governor's plans on expanding sports capacity through funds from the U.S. Economic Development Administration.

"[This] is another huge funding source that we've been able to avail of, to really put together our recovery in a much more concrete sense," Bautista said. "We're excited about the possibilities. We've been in coordination with PGC and a lot of our sports partners who have historically been leading sports and culture here on the islands.'

OPD director Kodep Ogumoro lobbied for the House of Representative's endorsement of the proposal to improve the Oleai Sports Complex in December, stating that it is among the top 20 priority projects under the Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy that the OPD has prepared.

The House, in turn, endorsed the plan to improve the sports complex through House Resolution 21-23, as introduced by Rep. John Paul P. Sablan (R-Saipan).

"There is a lot to look forward to with the new funding, and now the whole technical process of finding construction workers, putting the projects down and going from a groundbreaking to a ribboncutting is the most important thing for us now, ahead of



ROSELYN MONROYO File photo shows the Oleai Sports Complex.

2021," Bautista said.

The Department of Community and Cultural Affairs, meanwhile, submitted last Dec. 20 a request for a grant of \$18 million to \$20 million to the U.S. Economic Development Administration to renovate the Ada gymnasium and remake it into a "world-class" sporting complex as well as a cultural center, with a 2020 deadline if the grant is approved.

The EDA grant will also help DCCA with a cultural event site at the Civic Center in Susupe, which would include about 75 permanent "island-style" booths, a main stage, restrooms, walkways, landscaping that would accommodate future festivals and big events, and more.

According to DCCA Secretary Robert H. Hunter, when DCCA first managed the gym, the facilities weren't well maintained because their budget was only \$400,000 a year and that wasn't enough to keep the facility clean and functional. If the grant application with EDA is approved, then the facility will need at least \$700,000 or more a year to be well-maintained; otherwise it will be in the condition it always has been in.

"We haven't fully taken advantage of our two avenues, which are sports and culture. If we can capitalize on that through the renovation of the gym, bring back the Asia's baseball teams, hold swim meets, hold tennis events, track events, and more, that would be fantastic," said Hunter.

Even without the EDA grant, the DCCA still plans to build a cultural center at the Civic Center, Hunter said. One of the visions for the cultural in 2020 are monthly festivals that will include a plumeria festival, breadfruit festivals, Festival of the Pacific Arts, and more.

A tentative yes or no from the EDA will be available by the end of January or early February.



PLANE

From Page 1

ing it crashing into the ground, Biniaz said, according to the state-run IRNA news agency.

The plane carried 167 passengers and nine crew members from different nations on its flight to the Ukrainian capital, Kyiv, Biniaz said. The crash killed all on board, Iranian emergency officials and Ukraine's Foreign Ministry said.

Flight data from the airport showed a Ukrainian 737-800 flown by Ukraine International Airlines took off Wednesday morning, then stopped send-

ing data almost immediately afterward, according to website FlightRadar24. The airline did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskiy extended his condolences to the families of the victims. His office said he had cut his visit to Oman short and was returning to Kyiv because of the crash. The country's Prime Minister Oleksiy Honcharuk confirmed the casualty toll.

"Our task is to establish the cause of the crash of the Boeing and provide all necessary help to the families of the victims," said parliament speaker, Dmytro Razumkov, in a Facebook statement.

The majority of the passengers were Iranian nationals, Russia's RIA Novosti agency reported, citing Iranian authorities. Staff at the Boryspil airport in Kyiv, where the plane was headed, told The Associated Press that passengers on this flight are usually Iranian students coming back to Ukraine after winter holidays

Associated Press journalists who reached the crash site saw a wide field of field of debris scattered across farmland. The dead lay among shattered pieces of the aircraft. Rescuers in masks shouted over the noise of hovering helicopters as they worked.

The crash came hours after Iran launched a ballistic missile attack targeting two bases in Iraq housing U.S. forces in retaliation for the killing of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani.

The Boeing 737-800 is a very common single-aisle, twin-engine jetliner used for short to medium-range flights. Thousands of the planes are used by airlines around the world.

Introduced in the late 1990s, it is an older model than the Boeing 737 MAX, which has been grounded for nearly 10 months following two deadly crashes.

A number of 737-800 aircraft have been involved in deadly accidents over the years.

In March 2016, a Fly-Dubai 737-800 from Dubai crashed while trying to land at Rostov-on-Don airport in Russia, killing 62 onboard. Another 737-800 flight from Dubai, operated by Air India Express, crashed in May 2010 while trying to land in Mangalore, India, killing more than 150 onboard.

Chicago-based Boeing Co. was "aware of the media reports out of Iran and we are gathering more information," spokesman Michael Friedman told the AP.

Boeing, like other airline manufacturers, typically assists in crash investigations. However, that effort in this case could be affected by the U.S. sanctions campaign in place on Iran since President Donald Trump unilaterally withdrew from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers in May 2018.

Both Airbus and Boeing had been in line to sell billions of dollars of aircraft to Iran over the deal, which saw Tehran limit its enrichment of uranium in exchange for the lifting of economic sanctions. But Trump's decision halted the sales.

school was cleared at approxi-

"We followed our protocols and conducted a lockdown. We are currently working with investigators and DPS to work out the details. But it was a successful lockdown, not a drill, unfortunately, but we were able to identify just what we needed to do and follow our procedures," said Staffler. "Thank you for all the parents and people outside that called to check on us. We appreciate your support. We followed our procedures so all students and

The case remains ongoing and if you have any information on this incident, call 911. If you wish to remain anonymous, call the CNMI Crime Stoppers hotline at 234-7272. (With a report from Jus-



Debris is seen from a plane crash on the outskirts of Tehran, Iran, Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2020. A Ukrainian airplane carrying at least 170 people crashed on Wednesday shortly after takeoff from Tehran's main airport, killing all onboard, state TV reported.

PSS

From Page 1

the request for the PSS budget reduction was actually just a "what if" scenario in case the economy will go awry.

"It was a miscommunication. They were asking us where would we reduce because our budget, 95% goes to personnel, so I was looking at our personnel salary," he said.

The FPA committee unanimously voted yesterday to uphold the status quo and no salary deductions will be made.

Ada added that the idea to reinstate the compensation plan of 2016 was the only proactive contingency plan he could think up to keep PSS afloat in case they were required to reduce their budget by another 50%.

"The reduction was a proactive plan. We have to make sure that we have a cushion and be safe down the line, at least two or three paydays down the line. I don't want

to be the one to tell the staff, 'Oh, we're not getting paid this week because there is no money generated.' Secretary of Finance David Atalig and Gov. Ralph DLG Torres assuring us that there would be no payless payday for PSS is a sigh of relief for me and for everybody," he said.

Despite the miscommunication, Ada said that he is very happy to know that PSS has a plan in case the economy goes down.

"I've always believed in being proactive and making sure that we have a contingency plan in place. These scenarios are just in case it happens [so] there will be no surprise," he said.

Ada said that after meeting with Atalig after the FPA committee meeting last Tuesday, things are looking up for PSS.

"...In terms of...all...obligations, we are now up to date. We are now in the second quarter and we are comfortable with the fact that everyone will be receiving their payroll on time," he said.

IPI

From Page 1

\$300,000 are from former contractor, Pacific Rim Land Development LLC, and subcontractor USA Fanter Corp.

Pacific Rim is suing IPI in federal court for alleged nonpayment of services in the amount of \$5.65 million. USA Fanter president Guocao Qian said IPI's site engineer approved completion of 41.1%, totaling \$2.39 million of the total contract of \$5.8 million. Qian said IPI only paid \$300,000 in August 2019 after a threatened notice of work stoppage was issued on Aug. 20, 2019.

At the last Dec. 19 Commonwealth Casino Commission monthly regular meeting, representatives of many vendors and former IPI contractors who are allegedly collectively owed \$35 million jointly appealed to CCC to take action against IPI, whom they accused of en-

gaging in a pattern and practice of breaching contracts and dishonoring obligations to licensed professionals in the CNMI.

At the same meeting, Rep. Edwin K. Propst (Ind-Saipan) appealed to the CCC to ensure that IPI be made to pay the CNMI government \$18 million in developer's infrastructure tax, \$37 million in community benefit fund, and millions of dollars more to its vendors and former contractors.

CCC recently disclosed that they are currently investigating disputes between IPI and some of their vendors, based on the claims at the Dec. 19 meeting.

In a statement yesterday, IPI said they honor business commitments and financial obligations.

"IPI appreciates the contribution by our business partners and will maintain our increased level of staff and effort on clearing payment requests," IPI said.



CHRISTMAS PARTY

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona, third from left, magistrate judge Heather L. Kennedy, extreme left, and chief deputy clerk Bill Bezzant, standing fourth from left, join some employees of Fuji Pacific Inc. in a group photo during the District Court's Christmas Party at the American Memorial Park in Garapan. The court recognized the work of the long-time Filipino employees of Fuji Pacific in maintaining the Horiguchi Building, where the federal court is located. The District Court is expected to transfer early this year to the new District Courthouse Building in Gualo Rai. FERDIE DE LA TORRE

THREAT

From Page 1

of Public Safety and Federal Bureau of Investigation, if it is later determined that the threat came from a specific student, the punishment will most likely be expulsion.

However, Ada added, the consequences also depend on whether it was a prank or had a deeper underlying issue.

"Depending on the investigation and what the outcome is, it's most likely expulsion and they won't be able to come back until next year. But a lot of factors come into play. ...Maybe this student might be unstable, this student could be under incarceration with [Division of Youth Services], or is this student is undergoing some mental issues, or just

being their silly self. But they will be counseled and punished accordingly," he said.

Ada said DPS, with the help of other agencies like the FBI, will exhaust all resources necessary to find and catch the perpetrator.

"Whoever is involved, know that you will be caught. When people's lives are at stake, it's a big issue and it will become a big investigation. They won't stop until they find the perpetrator. With all this technology, it's easy to backtrack, so my advice to you students-you're not going to win, you will get caught," he said.

According to a DPS statement, DPS received a 911 call from Kagman High School main office around 10:27am yesterday, reporting an email threat sent to the school. At

about 10:30am, police officers met with Kagman High principal Leila Staffler, who briefed officers on the incident and showed officers that an email was sent to her school email address from a student's email address.

The principal met with the student who owned the email address and that student denied sending the email. Upon further investigation, it was found that the student was transitioning to another class during the time when the email was sent. It is now believed that the student may have left his/her email account logged in at one of the school's computers and another student may have gone online using the logged-in account.

The school was later searched for weapons and, after finding nothing, the

mately 12pm.

staff at Kagman are good."

tine Nauta)

Man who claimed insanity is found competent to stand trial

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE ferdie delatorre@saipantribune.com

A 20-year-old man who is accused of sexually abusing a female minor in 2017 and had intended to rely upon the defense of insanity has been found competent to stand trial.

In an order yesterday, Superior Court Associate Judge Kenneth L. Govendo said that, after carefully reviewing the testimonies and the reports submitted by both the prosecution and the defense, he finds Search Osilek Jr. to be competent to stand trial.

Govendo found that Osilek has sufficient present ability to consult with his lawyer with a reasonable degree of rational understanding—and that he has a rational understanding of the proceedings against him.

The judge said that Osilek suffers from a mild intellectual disability but that his mental disorder has no appreciable impact on the nature of the quality of his relationship with his lawyers.

Govendo said Osilek does not suffer from any mental illness or defect that renders him unable to understand the nature and consequences of the proceedings against him.

"[Osilek] does not suffer from any mental disease or defect which renders him unable to properly assist his attorney in his defense," the judge said.

Police said Division of Youth Services social workers reported that Osilek allegedly raped a 15-year-old girl during the 2017 Christmas break.

Osilek reportedly admitted in a police interview to having had

253 earn degrees at UOG graduation

The University of Guam conferred degrees to 253 students last Dec. 22, 2019, at its Fanuchånan 2019 Commencement Ceremony at the UOG Calvo Field House. Crossing the stage were 176 undergraduate and 77 graduate students. The number of master's degrees conferred is 30% higher than last year.

The largest number of graduates came from the School of Business and Public Administration, which conferred 102 undergraduate and graduate degrees. The business school and the School of Education graduated the most master's students, conferring 33 degrees each.

Biology major Natasha D. Hagans was named the class valedictorian, and Annmarie T. Muña, general manager for AM Insurance and a 1983 UOG alumna majoring in management and business administration, delivered the commencement address. (UOG)

nonconsensual sex with the girl.

On Jan. 30, 2018, the Office of the Attorney General charged Osilek with sexual abuse of a minor in the first degree and sexual assault in the first degree.

In April 2018, Osilek, through counsel, filed a motion for mental examination, notifying the court that he intended to rely upon the defense of insanity at the time of the alleged crime.

Two weeks later, the court ordered that Osilek undergo a psychiatric examination to determine whether he had any mental illness, disease, or defect at the time of the offense.

The judge also ordered a psychiatric evaluation to determine hiss competency to stand trial and appointed Dr. Martin Blinder, the defendant's retained psychiatrist, to perform the examinations.

The government also hired Dr. Dennis R. Donovan, a clinical psychologist, to evaluate Search.

From September to October

2019, Govendo he heard testimonies from Blinder and Dono-

van, the defendant's high school members of defendant's dance teachers, former administrators,

group, previous employer, and

his court-appointed counsel,



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CUC warns of abnormal PFOS, PFOA levels in tap water

ties Corp. has detected levels of perfluorooctane sulfonate and perfluorooctanoic acid that exceed the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's health advisory level of 70 parts per trillion in a limited area of its drinking water system.

The affected areas include the villages of Chalan Laulau, Iliying, Chalan Kiya, As Terlaje, Kannat Tabla, Fina Sisu, Oleai, and parts of southern Garapan, Gualo Rai, Susupe, As Lito, and As Perdido.

CUC is advising consumers in these areas to avoid drinking the water at this time and until the concentrations of PFOS and PFOA are below the health advisory level. Consumers should not drink tap water, cook with tap water, or make ice for consumption with tap water. CUC is making this advisory action to help the affected population limit their lifetime exposure to these chemicals.

The two chemicals, more commonly referred to as PFOS and PFOA, are humanmade substances and are not

ON THE NET

- https://www.epa.gov/groundwater-and-drinking-water/drinking-water-health-advisories-pfoa-and-pfos
- https://www.epa.gov/sites/production/files/2016-06/documents/drinkingwaterhealthadvisories_pfoa_pfos_updated_5.31.16.pdf

naturally found in the environment. They have been used extensively in commercial goods (carpets, clothing, furniture, paper packaging for food) and in materials that are resistant to water, grease or stains such as cookware. They are also used in firefighting foams at airfields and in a number of industrial processes. Between 2000 and 2002, PFOS was voluntarily phased out of production in the U.S. by its primary manufacturer.

While consumer products are a large source of human exposure to these chemicals, drinking water can be an additional source of exposure in communities where these chemicals have entered and contaminated water supplies. Such contamination is typically localized and associated with a specific facility, for example, an airfield at which they were used for firefighting.

EPA has established lifetime health advisories of 70 parts per trillion for combined concentrations of PFOA and PFOS in drinking water. EPA health advisories include a margin of protection from adverse health effects when consumed at these levels over a lifetime.

Studies indicate that exposure to PFOA and PFOS over certain levels may result in adverse health effects, including developmental effects to fetuses during pregnancy or to breastfed infants (e.g., low birth weight, accelerated puberty, skeletal variations), cancer (e.g., testicular, kidney), liver effects (e.g., tissue damage), immune effects (e.g., antibody production and immunity), thyroid effects and other effects (e.g., cholesterol changes).

What CUC has done

In compliance with EPA and

the CNMI Bureau of Environmental and Coastal Quality requirements, CUC conducted unregulated contaminant monitoring of its drinking water supplies in 2015 and 2016.

In May 2016, EPA and BECQ requested that CUC conduct follow-up monitoring of its supplies for PFOA and PFOS. CUC conducted additional testing in June 2016 and continues to conduct additional monitoring. The results of this monitoring resulted in CUC removing eight wells in the Isley and Obyan well fields near the Saipan International Airport from service.

Updated information

On Dec. 2, 2019, CUC collected a sample from the As Terlaje Tank to monitor the concentration levels of PFOS and PFOA in the water supply. The As Terlaje Tank receives water from the suspected source of the initial contamination. Results received by CUC on concentration of PFOS and PFOA was 105 parts per trillion, exceeding the health advisory of 70 parts per trillion.

The As Terlaje Tank provides water to the following areas: Chalan Laulau, Iliying, Chalan Kiya, As Terlaje, Kannat Tabla, Fina Sisu, Oleai, and parts of southern Garapan, Gualo Rai, Susupe, As Lito, and As Perdido.

What is CUC doing

It is not possible to take all wells containing PFOS and PFOA out of service without dramatically affecting delivery of water to customers. The goal is to reduce the combined concentration from all wells to below the health advisory level. To achieve this goal, CUC is taking the following measures:

- CUC has removed from service eight wells with elevated levels of PFOS and
- CUC will continue to test the concentration of PFOS and PFOA in all the wells presently supplying water to the areas affected by this advisory.
- CUC will also continue to monitor for these contaminants at the sources surrounding the affected areas.
- CUC will report to BECQ and the community the results of all further testing.
- CUC is presently pursuing grant funding to purchase and install granular activated carbon filtration systems, which have proven to remove these specific contaminants. CUC has submitted all required documents for the grant application and is pending final award of the grant funds. (PR)

Area inside line received water that exceeded the health advisory level of 70 ppt for PFOS and PFOA as of Dec. 2, 2019.

Public warned to stay out of the water The public is being warned continue to generate strong casionally reach 11 feet over

that there is a high risk for rip currents along east facing reefs through Friday afternoon.

A small craft advisory is also in effect along coastal waters on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota until 5pm Friday.

A high surf advisory is now in effect through this afternoon.

North to northeast swell will produce hazardous surf along north facing reefs through this afternoon.

Along north facing reefs, expect hazardous surf of 8 to 10 feet to gradually subside below hazardous levels by this afternoon. The risk of rip currents will also drop to moderate.

Along east facing reefs, larger breaking waves will

and frequent rip currents. The risk of rip currents should fall to moderate by Friday

Small craft can be blown off course or capsized. The highest sea heights will be east of the Marianas.

Wind speeds up to 25 knots are expected to produce hazardous conditions for operating small craft.

Based on the information received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam, and compiled at the CNMI Emergency Operations Center State Warning Point, east winds 15 to 25 knots are seen to increase to 10 to 20 knots, with frequent gusts to 25 knots and seas of 8 to 10 feet. Seas could ocSaipan and Tinian waters.

Rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. The public is advised to avoid venturing out along the reef line, especially along north and east facing reefs and beaches. Large breaking waves can knock you down and injure you.

Strong rip currents can sweep even the best swimmers away from shore into deeper water. If unable to escape, face the shore and call or wave for help.

The public and inexperienced mariners, especially those operating smaller vessels, are being advised to avoid sailing in these conditions. (Saipan Tribune)

Attao: More revenue-generating bills needed

By IVA MAURIN

iva_maurin@saipantribune.com

For 2020, Speaker Blas Jonathan Attao (R-Saipan) is asking members of the House of Representatives to craft revenue-generating legislations that would help the CNMI economy.

"One of the bigger things that I asked the members of the House is to think creatively and come up with legislations that are revenue-generating for our home. That's the vision for 2020," he said in a short interview.

With recovery efforts as last year's biggest challenge, the House had to get infrastructure back on track, to recover from the losses of the first quarter of 2019, according to Attao.

"We introduced some legislation to alleviate some of the financial situations that we went through, like owing our vendors, overtime payments,

[Federal Emergency Management Agency] matching, and all other assistance that we got from the outside," the speaker said.

While there are still people struggling and living in tents, the assistance from the outside has helped the CNMI economy recover in terms of the local workforce and in getting the local infrastructure "back in place where we're on our way to getting normal.

Attao added that with the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. getting more than \$243 million in Community Development Block Grant-Disaster Recovery funds, the CNMI is going to start seeing that money flow within the next six to eight months.

"That's new monies that's going to be put back into our economy will help our economy grow and get our infrastructures back, hopefully get a lot of our people out of these

tents and build more sustainable living conditions for our people," he said.

For 2020, from the House's side, the speaker said that the representatives have already done some work in 2019 to get them some new monies to circulate in the economy. But Attao said that they "need to do better in finding other revenue-generating legislations so that we can get that flowing back into our economy."

"During the inauguration of 2019, the message that I presented was that we will move as quick[ly] as our people in recovering, and we want to move quick[ly] and I hope we did enough to get us at least out of the water," he added. "2020 is to try to get our body out of the water so we don't have to worry about swimming anymore, we can be walking on shallow water. That's the goal

New law appropriates \$350K to NMHC

REPORTER

Gov. Ralph DLG Torres enacted Tuesday House Bill 21-93, HD1, that appropriates \$350,000 to the Northern Marianas Housing Corp. to address unmet needs pertaining to housing, infrastructure, and economic development.

The housing corporation is required to reimburse the entire amount to the Finance secretary, who should then deposit the entire amount back into the government's

Group Health and Life Insurance by at least the first month of the fourth quarter of fiscal year 2020, which is this July.

The new law amends P.L. 21-8 to make appropriations for the operations and activities of the CNMI government, its agencies, instrumentalities, and independent programs, and to provide budget authority for government corporations for fiscal year 2020.

The new law also ensures appropriate funding to cover

employer contribution to the the defined contribution and group health insurance expenses of the employees of the Legislature and Judiciary.

Torres had initially vetoed the provision on the defined contribution and group health insurance expenses for Legislature and Judiciary employees when he signed the fiscal year 2020 budget law, urging the two branches to account for the expenses within their own respective budgets.

Authored by Rep. Ivan A. Blanco (R-Saipan), H.B. 21-93 is now Public Law 21-16.

OIA lauds nat'l budget allocation for insular areas

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The ers permitted to support disas-U.S. Department of the Interior has applauded the recent enactment of two appropriation bills that, among others, funding increases for key programs provided by the Office of Insular Affairs to insular areas and increases the number of foreign construction work-

The two measures are the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2020, Public Law 116-94, and the 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, Public Law 116-92.

temporary increases in Med-

ON THE NET

- The full text of the Further Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2020 (Public Law 116-94) is available at: https://www.congress.gov/116/bills/hr1865/BILLS-116hr1865enr.pdf
- The full text of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2020 (Public Law 116-92) is available at: https:// www.congress.gov/116/bills/s1790/BILLS-116s1790enr.pdf.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Deadline for boat evictions at OCM

The Department of Lands and Natural Resources wishes to inform vessel owners/operators using the Outer Cove Marina that the department is preparing to evict or remove boats that are not allowed to berth at OCM for the following reasons:

- 1. Vessels lack berthing permits, and
- 2. Vessels without power/ engine to operate on their own within the OCM waterways.

Boats without power/engines will need to be removed on or before Friday, Jan. 31, 2020 (no later than 2pm).

Boats without berthing permit will need to be removed on or before Thursday, Feb. 27, 2020 (no later than 2pm).

For questions or concerns, contact the main office at (670) 322-9830/34 or email Augustin M. Kaipat at kaipat.dlnr@gmail.com for details. (PR)

Karidat to host rummage sale on Friday

The community is invited to a rummage sale that Karidat Social Services will be hosting on Friday, Jan. 10, 2020, in front of the Karidat main office in Chalan Kanoa, from 12pm to 4pm. We will be selling \$1 bags and you can stuff whatever you want into the bag. Lots of great new donations have come in from community donors. For more information, call Karidat at (670) 234-6981 or visit the Karidat Facebook Page. (PR)

Kagman schools set **PTSA** meeting

This is to inform all parents, guardians, and the community that the Kagman Unified Schools will be having a Parents Teachers Students Association meeting on Tuesday, Jan.14, 2020, at 5:30pm in the Chacha Ocean View Middle School School cafeteria. We are encouraging all parents, and guardians to attend this meeting. Child ter recovery in the CNMI.

The first one also provides

the any of the three schools at

237.3150 (KAGE), 237.3165

(COVMS), or 237.3196

(KHS) if you have any ques-

Navy training in Radio

ASAN, Guam—The U.S.

Navy will conduct direct action

training from 10am to 3pm on

These types of trainings are

designed to enhance the readi-

ness of military personnel.

This training will be accom-

panied by the use of blanks

and practice hand grenades.

Residents in surrounding ar-

eas should not be alarmed

if they see or hear increased

activity associated with the

CHCC Children's Clinic

to open on Saturdays

To better accommodate patient

schedules and the growing demand for primary care, the

Commonwealth Healthcare

Corp. Children's Clinic at the

main Navy Hill campus will begin accepting appointments

on Saturdays from 7:30am to

4:30pm effective Saturday,

No walk-ins will be ac-

cepted at the Children's Clinic

on Saturdays. To schedule an

appointment, call (670) 234-

Survivors, caregivers

for appointments

training. (PR)

Jan. 11, 2020.

8951. (PR)

Jan. 9 at Radio Barrigada.

tions or concerns. (PR)

Barrigada

waste from the atomic bomb tests the U.S. military did in the Marshall Islands. "President [Trump] has signed budget and defense care will be provided. Call

authorization legislation that includes several provisions important to our work and for the people in the insular areas," said Assistant Secretary, Insular and International Affairs, Douglas W. Domenech. "We appreciate the President and Congress for their mindfulness and attention in providing funding and support for the U.S. territories and freely associated states."

ries, increases the number of

foreign construction workers

in the CNMI to aid disaster re-

covery, and a \$5-million pay-

ment to the Trust Fund for the

People of the Republic of the

Marshall Islands for Tax and

Trade compensation provided

for under the Compact of Free

The second measure directs

studies to be done on Runit

Dome in the Republic of the

Marshall Islands. The dome

contains hazardous nuclear

Association.

Additional detail on the highlights are as follow:

■ OIA BUDGET IN-CREASES: The OIA received a \$2.2-million increase in its budget for fiscal year 2020. The OIA programs that

icaid funding for the territo- received additional funding for fiscal year 2020 are Energizing Insular Communities, American Samoa Operations, the Maintenance Assistance Program, the Coral Reef and Natural Resources Initiative, and the Enewetak Program.

> ■ PERMITS FOR CON-STRUCTION WORKERS IN THE CNMI: The legislation directs Homeland Security to provide 3,000 additional permits for foreign workers in construction and extraction occupations in the CNMI for fiscal years 2020, 2021, and 2022 related to typhoon recovery.

■ TAX AND TRADE **COMPENSATION** RMI: An amount of \$5 million for the benefit of the RMI to compensate for adverse financial and economic impacts as authorized by the Compact of Free Association, as amended, or Public Law 108-188. The \$5 million is designated for deposit to the Trust Fund for the People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands. The Trust Fund, as established under Public Law 108-188, will provide a source of income to the RMI government when direct grants under current law expire in 2023.

■ **MEDICAID**: The fiscal year 2020 budget included several important changes with respect to Medicaid for

FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

FY 2020 Budget:

- Five million-dollar payment to the Trust Fund for the People of the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) for Tax and Trade compensation made available under the Compact of Free Association;
- Medicaid funding increases for all the U.S. territories in 2020 and 2021;
- Number of permits increased for foreign construction workers allowed

the territories of American Samoa, Guam, the CNMI, and the U.S. Virgin Islands. The key change provides a temporary increase in the Federal Medical Assistance Percentage from the statutory level currently set at 55% to the maximum of 83%, two figures both set by law under the Social Security Act. The change takes effect for the period beginning Dec. 21, 2019, and ending Sept. 30, 2021.

■ RUNIT DOME: The fiscal year 2020 National Defense Authorization Act, also signed by Trump on Dec. 20, 2019, includes a provision requiring the Secretary of Energy to submit by June 2020 a report on the status of Runit Dome in the Republic of the

to support disaster recovery in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) through 2022; and

■ Two million-dollar increase in energy, maintenance, operations, coral reef preservation and other funding that benefits the insular areas.

FY 2020 NDAA:

■ Directs a study on the condition of Runit Dome in the RMI. (PR)

Marshall Islands. The report is to include 1) a detailed plan to repair the dome; 2) effects on the environment that the dome has currently and is projected to have in five years, 10 years, and 20 years; 3) an assessment of the current condition of the outer constructs of the dome; 4) an assessment of the current and long-term safety to local humans; 5) an assessment of how rising sea levels might affect the dome; and 6) a summery of bilateral interactions between the U.S. and the RMI about the dome. The report is to be made available to the public.

For more information on the Office of Insular Affairs, visit www.doi.gov/oia or follow Domenech on Twitter at @ ASIIADomenech. (PR)



Eight soldiers from the Guam Army National Guard prepare to depart for a mission in support of Operation Guardian Support at the southwest border in Yuma, Arizona. Pictured, from left, are Maj. Gen Esther J.C. Aguigui, The Adjutant General; Sgt. Edwin Cantara; PFC Donna Mendiola; PFC Layla Ham; Staff Sqt. Mycolene Palomo; PFC Jesus Santos; PFC Joseph Atoigue; PFC Gerard Quichocho; Sqt. Jonathan Lujan; and State Command Sgt. Maj. Agnes Diaz, Guam Army National Guard senior enlisted adviser. **GUAM NATIONAL GUARD**

support group meeting All people facing cancer, their family members, and care-The mission continues as eight soldiers from the Guam givers are invited to the next National Guard departed on Jan. 8 en route to Yuma, Ari-

Commonwealth Cancer Association monthly support group meeting scheduled today, Jan. 9, starting at 5:30pm at the Hyatt Regency Saipan's Chamolinian Room. The guest speaker is Lynn Tenorio, research assistant, University of Guam. Her presentation will be on the Betel Nut Intervention Trials Project. To RSVP or for more information, call the CCA at 682-0050 or email at ccamarianas@gmail.com. (PR)

zona, in support of Operation

west border. The soldiers are part of a second rotation that will replace soldiers returning home. They will be tasked with providing operational support for domestic operations at the southern border between the United States and Mexico. As of this time, there are about 37

Guardian Support at the south-

soldiers and airmen supporting that mission.

than Guam Guard soldiers from the 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment are supporting a peacekeeping mission in the Sinai Peninsula. They are part of a Multinational Force and Observers team, consisting of about 12 countries, who supervise the implementation of the security provisions of the 1979 Egyptian-Israeli Treaty of Peace and employ best efforts to prevent any violation of its terms.

Guam Guard soldiers are also supporting the security forces mission for Task Force Talon, who is responsible for operating the Terminal High Altitude Area Defense gear located at Andersen Air Force Base, Yigo, Guam.

One Guam Guard airman is deployed to the Centcom region supporting Operation INHERENT RESOLVE and its mission there.

The Guam Guard confirmed yesterday that there are no Guam Guard soldiers or airmen currently serving in Iraq

"The Guard asks the public for their continued support of our soldiers, airmen, and their families," said Maj. Gen. Esther Aguigui, The Adjutant General of the Guam National Guard. "We still have soldiers and airmen who are currently deployed or supporting missions around the world. Please keep them and their families in your thoughts and prayers now and for the duration of their deployments," she added. (PR)

New US law requires probe of Marshall Islands nuclear dump

By SUSANNE RUST LOS ANGELES TIMES

Congress is demanding that the Department of Energy investigate an aging, cracking U.S. nuclear waste dump threatened by climate change and rising seas in the Marshall Islands.

As part of the new National Defense Authorization Act, signed last week by President Donald Trump, the energy agency must submit a report by mid-June on the risks that Runit Dome poses to the people, environment and wildlife of Enewetak lagoon — the site of 44 nuclear bomb detonations during the Cold War.

It must also include an assessment of how climate change could affect the site, although the term "climate change" was dropped as the bill moved through the Senate Armed Services Committee, which is chaired by Oklahoma's James M. Inhofe, one of Congress' most outspoken climate change skeptics.

According to the law, the energy agency must submit a report that includes an "assessment of how rising sea levels might affect the dome."

The investigation was applauded by at least one representative of the Marshall Islands, which continues to contend with the radioactive legacy of U.S. nuclear testing. The island nation sits in a remote part of the central Pacific, 5,000 miles southwest of Los Angeles.

"We are encouraged by the inclusion in the (act) of the requirement," said Rhea Moss-Christian, chairwoman of the Marshall Islands' National Nuclear Commission, a three-



Majuro is the most populated island in the Marshall Islands, with a population of approximately 25,000. The island of Ebeye is more densely populated, but smaller.

person government panel that reports directly to the president on nuclear issues in the islands.

She said the original language for the bill, which was introduced by U.S. Rep. Tulsi Gabbard (D-Hawaii), required a plan for relocating the waste, as well as an assessment of how local food is affected by the dome.

Moss-Christian said her committee was disappointed these elements were not included in the final version, which the president signed. But she added that she was hopeful the new law "will yield useful results to better inform our decision making."

There was no immediate response from the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory, which the Energy Department has assigned to monitor Runit Dome and the radiation leaking from it.

The waste site, known alternatively as the Tomb, or simply the Dome, holds more than 3.1 million cubic feet — or 35 Olympic-size swimming pools—of U.S.-produced radioactive soil and debris, including lethal amounts of plutonium.

Nowhere else has the United States saddled another country with so much of its nuclear waste, a product of its Cold War atomic testing program.

From 1946 to 1958, the United States detonated 67 nuclear bombs on, in and above the Marshall Islands — vaporizing whole islands, carving craters into its shallow lagoons and exiling hundreds of people from their homes.

Department of Energy contractors admitted last spring that the dome is vulnerable to rising sea levels and storm waves, and is leaking into Enewetak lagoon. Studies have shown elevated levels of radioactive contamination in local seafood, including giant

clam

This year, the Los Angeles Times published an investigation of the dome and Enewetak lagoon, revealing that it was the location of at least a dozen biological weapons tests and also the repository for 130 tons of soil from an irradiated Nevada testing site.

The investigation also documented decades of U.S. deception in the Marshall Islands, including the withholding of critical information about people's exposure to radiation. Thousands of documents about the testing program are still classified, leaving many Marshallese distrustful and unsure about the full impact of U.S. weapons testing there.

For decades, the Marshallese have expressed alarm about Runit Dome and its potential risk to the 650 inhabitants of Enewetak lagoon, who fish and harvest seafood from the lagoon, and collect coconut, pandanus, coconut crabs and breadfruit from islands in the atoll.

In July, a team led by Emlyn Hughes of Columbia University's K=1 Project — a program designed to investigate nuclear weapons issues across the globe — found elevated levels of radiation on Runit Island.

According to their research, levels were higher than those found emanating from soils near the sites of the Chernobyl melt-down and the Fukushima disaster.

"At last the U.S. government seems to be getting serious about addressing this serious environmental issue that it created decades ago," said Michael Gerrard, a legal scholar at Columbia University's law school. "This is a very welcome development."

It also comes soon after the U.S. announced its intention to extend its Compact of Free Association with the Marshall Islands, which was set to expire in 2023.

The compact, which was initially signed in 1986, provides the Marshallese government with funding, allows its citizens to work and travel in the United States without visas, and provides the U.S. government with a strategic military base on Kwajalein Atoll — the center for U.S. intercontinental ballistic missile testing.

Recently, the United States and another world power have been vying for influence over the Marshall Islands, because of its strategic position in the Pacific.

As China has increased its financial and military presence in the region, the United States has been losing footing with formerly staunch allies, including Kiribati and the Solomon Islands.

Many Marshallese argue the U.S. has not done enough to address its history of radioactive contamination in the islands or help the nation deal with the growing assaults of climate change.

A recent general election in the Marshall Islands could determine whether the government develops a closer relationship with China, which has been courting the island nation. The results are still not official, but New Zealand media reported that an opposition slate of candidates is ahead and could triumph over incumbent President Hilda Heine, resulting in policies more favorable to China.

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 09, 2001

700 workers duped in another savings scam

A busload of angry garment factory workers trooped to the Department of Public Safety yesterday to complain the owner of Long City Traders Corp. who allegedly ran away with hundreds of thousands of dollars they entrusted in exchange for "bigger" interest rate. This is the second time in less than a month that a group of Chinese garment workers complained to DPS of being victimized by perpetrators of this savigs scam. At least 45 workers have earlier came forward to sue a couple who allegedly collected from them over \$100,000 on promise that their investment will double in just two months. (See related story on Page 3)

RP, CNMI labor pact sealed

Newly-hired Saipan-bound Filipino workers will not be allowed entry in the Commonwealth unless they are able to show a certificate issued by the Philippine Overseas Employment Administration. This came following last month's signing of the amended version of the existing Philippines-CNMI Bilateral Labor Agreement in Manila. Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio headed the Commonwealth delegation who met with Philippine officials led by Labor and Employment Secretary Bienvenido Laguesma and Undersecretary Felicisimo Joson.

January 09, 2005

PSS official hopes no more repeat of fiscal problem

Education commissioner Rita Hocog Inos hopes there will be no repeat of the fiscal crisis that threatened to shutdown the Commonwealth's public school system this week. Meeting with public school principals at the PREL Service Center at the Marianas High School Friday, Inos said she was happy that the government was able to avert the shutdown but at the same time decried being nearly forced into the situation. "I am sorry that we have put the PSS to this point [of having to shut down the schools]. But we cannot continue to be like this, to be on pins and needles," she said.

Anatahan eruptions escalate

Volcanic eruptions on Anatahan island have escalated, with the volcano spewing pyroclastic rocks hundreds of feet into the air, while seismicity and ash emissions continued to intensify and billow during the past days, sometimes rising up to 5,000 feet. The Emergency Management Office reported this after conducting an overflight on Anatahan—an uninhabited island located about 120 kilometers north of Saipan—last Friday. "Everytime there were explosions, there were black rocks—sometimes red—being thrown several hundred feet into the air," said EMO's Juan Takai Camacho, who flew over the island Friday.

January 09, 2006

Heat, overcrowding fail to dampen rites

There was sporadic drizzling throughout the island, but it

was hot and crowded at the sites of the inauguration for the CNMI's three highest-ranking public officials and new set of lawmakers. The sweating and soaking, however, did not prevent many people from staying until the end of the rites. Rain showers greeted guests shortly before the scheduled 2pm inauguration of Gov.-elect Benigno R. Fitial, Lt. Gov.-elect Timothy P. Villagomez and Resident Representative to the U.S.-elect Pedro A. Tenorio at the Marianas High School Gymnasium. The showers prompted many attendees who were slowly walking toward the entrance of the MHS Gym to rush inside the building. By then, most of the dignitaries and VIP off-island guests were already secured in their seats. When the drizzle momentarily halted, the guests and the audience started to feel the heat.

'Economy governors'

Newly installed Gov. Benigno R. Fitial vowed yesterday to be the governor who will revive the Commonwealth's slumping economy and restore finance integrity in the government. Fitial was sworn in as the 6th elected governor of the Northern Marianas during a private ceremony at the Multi-Purpose Center at midnight of Jan. 9, 2006, Commonwealth Day. A ceremonial oath-taking took place at the Marianas High School gymnasium at 2:30pm yesterday. In his inaugural address, Fitial said he and Lt. Gov. Timothy P. Villagomez would be known as the "economy governors." "This administration's top priority is the economy—the foundation for education, public safety, health and welfare, infrastructure development, and social programs," Fitial told the overwhelming crowd that turned up for the inauguration rites.

FSM govt condoles with Australia over wildfire damage

PALIKIR. Pohnpei—Federated States of Micronesia president David W. Panuelo said Jan. 6 that the wildfires presently devastating Australia—one of the FSM's closest friends—are a humanitarian crisis that the global community ought to respond to.

In a statement by his office, it said that Panuelo will be working with the 21st FSM Congress to determine how FSM can extend a helping hand to a close friend and development partner.

While wildfires in Australia are not uncommon during summer months due to the country's enormous land area and relative aridity, December 2019 and the first several days in January 2020 have seen fires grow and expand at an unprecedented level. To the knowledge of the FSM government, as of Jan. 6, 2020, approximately 19 people have died from the smoke and the flames, as well as 500,000,000 animals. The more than 200 active fires have generated a smoke plume that is reportedly larger than the FSM, including its entire exclusive economic zone, and more than 48,000 square kilometers of land have been destroyed.

"The fires in Australia are equivalent to every island in the FSM burning—not just at

Free NMC info session tonight

The Northern Marianas College is reminding all community members who are interested in advancing their careers and furthering their education to attend NMC's free information session tonight, Jan. 9, 2020. In addition to the admission process, college personnel will talk about financial aid options that are available for the spring 2020 semester.

The info session will be held from 5:30pm to 6:30pm at NMC's Olympio T. Borja Library at the college's As Terlaje campus.

Participants of the info session will qualify to have their application fee and their placement test fees waived for NMC's upcoming spring 2020 semester—a savings of about \$75.

The first day of classes will be on Jan. 21, 2020. Interested applicants are encouraged to apply now to register for courses and for financial aid.

For more information about registering for classes for the upcoming spring 2020 semester or to apply for admission, contact the NMC Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768/6769/6771 or visit www.marianas.edu. (PR)



once, and not just twice or even three times, but more than one hundred times each," Panuelo said. "An area the size of the U.S. states of Vermont and

New Hampshire combined, or the Japanese island of Kyushu, or the Chinese island of Hainan, has been completely devastated. Communities full of

people that our nation knows as very dear friends are being hurt by these fires."

Australia, among other means of assistance, aids the FSM's maritime security regime through the provision of material support (e.g., the building and gifting of patrol boats) and training. Ad-

A firefighter battles a fire near Burrill Lake, Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020. Milder temperatures Sunday brought hope of a respite from wildfires that have ravaged three Australian states, destroying almost 2,000 homes.

ditionally, Australian citizens serve in the FSM's education, health, and other sectors, through the Australian Volunteers International program.

"I call on our friends and the global community to please help Australia during this time of crisis," the president said. "And it absolutely is a crisis. I can't imagine any other word to describe people losing their homes and their livelihood, and the very Earth itself being robbed of its precious life.'

At the time of this release, Panuelo advised staff within the FSM national government to set up a meeting with the Australian Embassy to express the nation's sympathies and condolences for the lives lost and the unprecedented damage that's occurred in Australia. (PR)

MVA ramps up marketing for Saipan Marathon

The Marianas Visitors Authority continues to build momentum on its international marketing of Saipan Marathon 2020, set for March 14, 2020, in the Marianas.

The MVA launched marketing for the annual signature event in August 2019, touting the race's full marathon, half marathon, 10K, and 5K courses traversing the picturesque shoreline of tropical Saipan. Activities have included the development of special tour packages with travel partners; Marianas sports seminars featuring marathon participants such as former Taiwan national marathoner Chun-Hua Chen, Marianas Ocean Tourism ambassador Yorko Summer, and Marianas intern Sunny Lin; personal distribution of flyers at running stations and other related businesses; announcements on the MVA's international social me-

ADDITIONAL INFO

Registration is now available via webscorer.com, with separate sites for:

- International competitors: https://www.webscorer. com/register?raceid=196894
- U.S./CNMI residents: https://www.webscorer.com/ register?raceid=197420)

INTERNATIONAL COMPETITORS

For international participants who register by Feb. 14, 2020, the fee for the full marathon is \$90, while the half marathon,



File photo shows Xiuping Liu of China celebrating after completing her 10K run at the 2019 Saipan Marathon on March 9, 2019. Saipan Marathon 2020 will be held on March 14, 2020.

dia platforms; and other advertising and promotions.

"We are looking for a solid turnout of runners, both inter-

10K, and 5K are \$60.

Registration between Feb. half marathon/10K/5K at 15-27, 2020, is \$100 for the \$45, and for students with full marathon and \$70 for the half marathon/10K/5K.

The last day to register for international participants is Feb. 27, 2020, at 5 p.m. (ChST).

US/CNMI RESIDENTS

A special registration rate is available for residents of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands and the United States. For those who qualify for this special rate and register by Feb. 14, 2020,

national and local, at the 2020 Saipan Marathon," said MVA managing director Priscilla M. Iakopo. "Having direct flights

the full marathon is \$55, the

valid student ID, \$30. Registration Feb. 15-27, 2020, for full marathon is \$65, for the half

marathon/10K/5K is \$55, and for students is \$55.

Residents of the CNMI and United States who register from Feb. 28 to March 6 will pay \$95 for the full marathon, \$85 for the half/ marathon/10K/5K, and \$55 for students. The last day to register for CNMI and U.S. residents in March. 6, 2020,

from Japan is expected to boost the number of Japanese participants, and the addition of a 5K course this year makes the mar-

at 5pm (ChST).

- Valid photo IDd is required to register.
- Registration includes the awards banquet, a finishers T-shirt, and a certificate of completion.
- Those who register by Feb. 14, 2020, will have their names included in the official 2020 Saipan Marathon booklet and on the finishers photo backdrop and will receive a personalized race bib. Additional fees for these benefits will apply after Feb. 14, 2020.
- The race start will start

>>> Skymark, athon more accessible to children, ioin as families, and runsponsors ners of all

fitness levels, even beginners."

Skymark Airlines is this year's first platinum sponsor, and Powerade also returns this year as an exclusive sponsor. Interested sponsors may MVA Community Projects specialist Ed Diaz at 1 (670) 664-3210 or ediaz@mymarianas.com for a sponsorship package.

Saipan Marathon is certified by the International Association of Athletic Federations through the Association of International Marathons and Distance Races.

For more information, visit The Marianas Calendar at www.mymarianas.com contact Diaz at ediaz@mymarianas.com. (PR)

and finish at American Memorial Park, starting at 4:30am for the full marathon, at 5:30am for the half marathon, at 5:45am for the 10K, and at 6am for the 5K. The cut-off time for the full marathon will be 8:30am at the halfway point. There is no cutoff time for the half marathon, 10K, or 5K.

■ All competitors are required to pick up their race packets on March 13, 2020, at American Memorial Park. Pickup times are 3pm to 4pm for team/groups/tour groups/ etc. and 4pm to 6pm for individuals only. (MVA)

10 THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Opinion



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0 1

Ap The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

Australia burns as the planet bakes

ustralia is on fire. Not all of it—but so far, flames have engulfed some 12 million acres, more than the land mass of Vermont and New Hampshire combined. Hundreds of homes have burned, and more than 140,000 people have been told to evacuate. More than two dozen have died. More than 1,000 residents of one coastal area had to be evacuated by ship. Hundreds of millions of animals are feared dead—and some species are likely to go extinct. "This is not a bush fire," one government official said. "It's an atomic bomb."

Rain fell in some of the affected areas Monday, but it promised only a brief pause. Australia's annual fire season normally doesn't peak until later.

It's not a mystery why events like these have grown more common and more destructive: Global temperatures have crept upward. Last year is expected to rank as the planet's second-hottest year on record, after 2016. Last July was the hottest month ever.

No individual weather episode can be definitively tied to global warming, but scientists agree it raises the frequency of extreme weather. The relentless buildup of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases has trapped heat and warmed the planet, with a vast array of harmful results. Oceans have risen. Polar ice is melting. Glaciers are shrinking. And land is burning.

The need for action to curb greenhouse gas emissions is urgent. But the Trump administration has gone the other way, pulling out of the Paris climate accord, scrapping the Obama administration's Clean Power Plan and weakening rules on auto emissions. The head of the Environmental Protection Agency, Andrew Wheeler, is a former coal industry lobbyist.

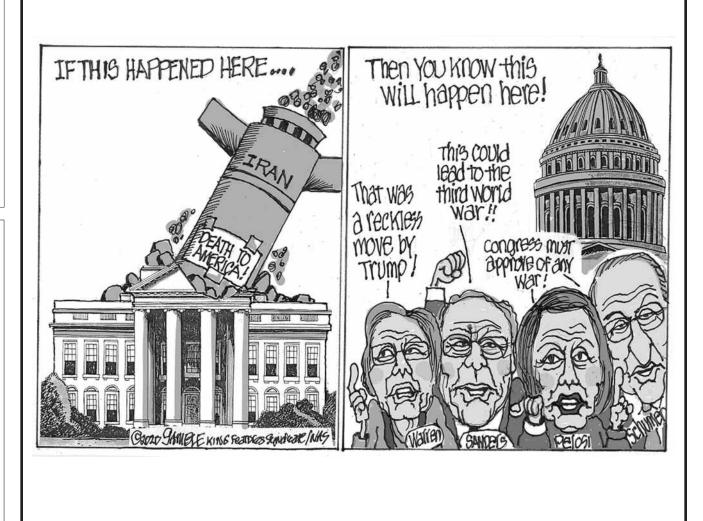
There are steps to be taken to slow and eventually reverse the greenhouse gas accumulation: Use less coal, oil and natural gas. Encourage their replacement with solar, wind and nuclear power. Increase the fuel economy of cars and trucks, and expand the number of electric vehicles. Take available measures to capture carbon dioxide, and develop better ones.

A tax on carbon, which would raise the price of fossil fuels to reflect the damage they do, would stimulate all these advances. It would provide an advantage to the least expensive alternatives. Phased in over time, it would minimize economic disruption by giving businesses and individuals time to adjust. As a sign carried by one Australian evacuee said, "Inaction costs more."

The needed policies won't have much effect on the immediate harms and risks caused by climate change—a problem that took decades to emerge and that will take decades to solve. But that's no excuse for refusing to change the practices that got us into our current fix.

If we want more of what Australia is suffering, doing more of the same is fine. If we hope to see a better future, we will have to take action to bring it about.

(c)2020 Chicago Tribune



Iraq's vote to expel US troops is Iran's true victory

ithout firing a shot, Iran appears to have executed a devastating revenge attack against the United States for the killing of Gen. Qassem Suleimani. Using Iraq's democratic process, Iranian-influenced members of parliament on Sunday voted to expel American soldiers from Iraq. With that, Iran may have effectively won the battle of influence in Iraq.

This strategic coup de grace was delivered not by rockets or suicide vests, but by legitimate votes in a democracy built by the United States.

Assuming the Iraqi prime minister signs this nonbinding bill into law—there is some chance he may not—American troops would have to be withdrawn. The Strategic Framework Agreement that established the basis for U.S. military presence in Iraq is unequivocal: "The temporary presence of U.S. forces in Iraq is at the full request and invitation of the sovereign Government of Iraq and with full respect for the sovereignty of Iraq." Iraqis are very likely to think that the United States violated Iraqi sovereignty in the drone attack in Baghdad that killed Suleimani and others, including Iraqi citizens, however nefarious they may have been.

The impacts could be far-reaching and damaging to American strategic interests. No troops on the ground, and ostensibly no aircraft overhead, will mean American forces will lose visibility of—and the ability to strike directly—Islamic State targets in Iraq. It is possible the entire Combined Joint Task Force command currently leading the fight against Islamic State might have to be relocated from Baghdad. Operations in Syria that are heavily dependent on support from Iraq would be severely weakened. Large coalition bases would have to be closed, leaving European allies and contractors with little choice but to also withdraw from Iraq.

Unless Iraqis also fully reject Iranian presence (an unlikely event), the United States would have to consider Iraq effectively lost to Iran. The so-called Shiite crescent stretching from Iran through Iraq to the Levant has been brought closer to reality. If Iran can maintain its foothold in Iraq, it now has won its land bridge across the crescent.

If American soldiers are ejected, the Iraqi security forces will lose their most capable and beneficent ally. Iraqis prosecuting the ongoing counterinsurgency against Islamic State would be in serious trouble. American advisors who have provided logistics and medical support would disappear. The Iraqi Counter-Terrorism Service, which has long been dependent on American sup-

By BEN CONNABLE

Los Angeles Times

Ben Connable is a senior political scientist at the nonprofit, nonpartisan RAND Corp. and a retired Marine Corps intelligence and Middle East Foreign Area officer.



port, would be cut loose to fend for itself.

In all likelihood the multibillion-dollar U.S. Counter-ISIL Train and Equip Fund, the primary source of funding for Iraq's security forces, would come to a halt as the Americans distributing the equipment are kicked out of the country. American aid to Iraqi civilians suffering from the recent war could very well dry up.

How did we get here? Did the U.S. walk into an Iranian strategic trap?

Perhaps, but if so, it is in part because the United States has been without a focused long-term strategy in Iraq for years. The Strategic Framework Agreement established in 2008 was shaky from the start.

There are two practical options left for the United States in Iraq. President Trump can take this expulsion as an opportunity to reduce America's involvement in overseas conflicts. Iraq could be effectively dumped into Iranian hands with the hopes that they would make a mess of it and, in turn, be expelled by increasingly frustrated Iraqis. This would seem to be a strategy of hope, and hope is not a strategy.

The other option would be to quickly renegotiate American military presence in Iraq. If the United States could maintain an advisor position, it might be able hold on to its combined counter-Islamic State headquarters and continue funding the training and equipment. All of these things are in Iraq's interest and they could be renegotiated if American diplomats were empowered to do so.

A reset in United States-Iraqi relations and a renegotiation of the Strategic Framework Agreement was needed before the current crisis. If U.S. policymakers and diplomats can settle on a long-term strategy for Iraq, a deal might be reached that could benefit both sides. This would help blunt Iran's victory, reinforce Iraqi sovereignty and normalize relations that have been anything but normal for far too long.

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions

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I wore my running shoes to work

y latest in what's now been a lifetime of ridiculous mind-games designed to get me back to the gym is a new strategy to wear my running shoes to work (I sit behind a desk). The basic premise is that I am far more likely—and at least one step closer to a work-out—if I have running shoes on my feet. I even went so far as to buy a fancy, 76-dollar pair of Nikes because we all know it's the shoes that *do it*.

So yeah, I've been wearing my running shoes to work lately, but I still haven't made it to the gym or worked out at all this year. And, if I'm being honest, it's no laughing matter.

Subsequently, another new strategy that I am rolling out (no pun intended) is to publicly out myself as being miserably overweight (because nobody could tell otherwise) in hopes that the mere shame of it all might get me to *just do it*.

And yes, I do feel a sense of shame about being, well, obese. By definition, I am morbidly obese except without any of the most common obesity-related health conditions, such as high blood pressure or diabetes, at least not yet—not an easy thing to admit to myself, much less to the public. Herein lie other tangential, mental health issues related to obesity and the co-existing nature of conditions in mind, body, and soul, but that's a whole other conversation unto itself and for another time.

To be clear, I couldn't care less about how I look or about what other people think of my Pillsbury figure. I'd like to think there are still people in the world who appreciate a man they can grab a hold of and I've never been one to put much credence into the value placed on aesthetics or other societal norms/expectations related to appearances. It's all in the eye of the beholder. Concerns with obesity should never be about looks because the truth is that being fat is dangerous (literally a matter of life and death), physically uncomfortable, if not painful, and, in some cases, extremely painful.

The further truth is I feel shame in knowing that I can't blame anybody but myself for my lifestyle choices and the consequences of my failing health. Most of all, though, I feel a sense of shame for being a bad example to my kids and in knowing my heightened risk of dying even as they are still in primary school.

According to the internet, "Overweight and obesity are the fifth leading risk for global deaths. At least 2.8 million adults die each year as a result of being overweight or obese. Forty-four percent of the diabetes burden, 23% of the ischemic heart disease burden and between 7% and 41% of certain cancer burdens are attributable to overweight and obesity."

Note to self: Strategy number three—Think of your kids! An oft stated, rarely heeded tidbit of knowledge too is that the

By JIM RAYPHAND

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jim Rayphand is executive director of the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.



older you get, the harder it is to shed weight and the more painful it becomes to *do it, then do it again*. I can bear witness.

Perhaps my biggest (pun intended) problem is thinking that I can simply run from my problems. I mean, who says you can't run away from your problems? Right? The reality is that it hurts to run.

Maybe tomorrow I'll wear my walking shoes to work. Yeah, that's it, baby steps. My fourth new strategy then is to wear my walking shoes to work—even I should be able to walk onto a treadmill…back at the gym.

For more information on protections for obesity related disabilities and other related mental health conditions, please contact NMPASI at (670) 235-7273/4 [voice] / 235-7275 [fax] or contact us on-line at www.nmpasi.org.

Killer superbugs are coming for you

By GREG FRANK LOS ANGELES TIMES

e're crawling on your skin. Teeming under your toenails. And lurking on your doorknobs and countertops.

We're drug-resistant microbes, immune to all

but your strongest antibiotics. And we're evolving so fast that soon even those medicines won't stop us. Unless your scientists invent new antibiotics, we'll kill 10 million people annually by 2050.

We didn't always pose such a dire threat to mankind. Antibiotics once threatened to eliminate our species. After your scientists developed these drugs in the 1920s, deaths from bacterial infections like pneumonia and cholera plummeted. In the United States, life expectancy jumped from 54 years in 1920 to almost 79 years today, according to Centers for Disease Control and Prevention statistics.

But over the years, your doctors prescribed the same treatments over and over—and we eventually evolved to resist them.

For instance, Bactrim, once a sure-fire cure for urinary tract infections, now can't effectively treat a third of them. Ceftriaxone, an antibiotic that previously knocked out gonorrhea, often proves ineffective against the sexually transmitted infection. It's so ineffective that the CDC recently changed nationwide treat-

ment protocols, urging doctors to prescribe a second antibiotic simultaneously. And numerous drugs have failed against a superbug known as CRE, or carbapenem-resistant Enterobacteriaceae, a type of microbe that's virtually untreatable.

All told, we drug-resistant microbes infect almost 3 million Americans each year and kill 162,000 of them.

Many of America's leading scientists want to develop new treatments to wipe us out. But they're struggling to attract financing for their work. The Food and Drug Administration has approved only one new class of antibiotics since the 1980s. As of September, drug companies were conducting just 42 antibiotics clinical trials worldwide. By comparison, they were testing thousands of experimental treatments for diseases such as cancer, Alzheimer's and multiple sclerosis.

Why isn't your scientific community pouring more resources into this fight? Frankly, the market discourages it. Developing a new drug takes more than a decade and costs more than \$2.5 billion.

Normally, your pharmaceutical companies would recoup those costs by selling new medicines in high volume. But that sales model doesn't work for advanced antibiotics. Your doctors would only prescribe new antibiotics in emergency cases. That's a smart precaution, medically speaking—it minimizes our chances to evolve and become immune to the new drugs.

But financially speaking, those limited prescriptions sound the

death knell for innovation. Drug companies wouldn't be able to sell enough doses to recoup their research costs, let alone turn a profit.

This market failure explains why drug firms are throwing in the towel. Just last year, three major pharmaceutical companies halted antibiotic research. Firms are turning to more lucrative investments such as cancer research and heart disease.

Your policymakers still have time to fix the market. They could, for instance, offer market-entry rewards to firms that develop new antibiotics. One former chief economist at Goldman Sachs Group Inc. suggests offering a \$1 billion reward to any company that creates a novel, FDA-approved antibiotic.

Policymakers could also reform reimbursements. Congress is considering a bill that would let Medicare offer higher payments to hospitals that use advanced antibiotics, when appropriate. That would enable hospitals to purchase newer antibiotics, boosting demand for such drugs and spurring biotech companies to pour more resources into R&D.

Unless your leaders act, we'll continue growing stronger. Soon, we'll achieve our goal—a world where antibiotics don't work and millions die from simple infections.

Greg Frank is director of Working to Fight AMR, an organization funded by the biopharmaceutical industry that works to build support for antimicrobial drug development.

Trumpty Dumpty Tweeter Tales

"While this America settles in the mould of its vulgarity, heavily thickening to empire,

And protest, only a bubble in the molten mass, pops and sighs out, and the mass hardens"

—From Shine, Perishing Republic by Robinson Jeffers (1887–1962)

Shame on Our Redacted Republic

I sadly smile along with POTUS 45 for different reasons and protest with poetry about his three years and seasons out of concern since his angry Jan. 2016 inauguration speech when he flipped out insults so his diehard base need no reasons He tweets in haste and then his adopted party makes waste of almost every new bill the House Democrats have passed a partisan lawmaking blockade Moscow Mitch can taste as they redact their own communications saving few that last.. Rick Gates and others are still in the sentencing process

as 45's fleet of lawyers obfuscate and put the brakes on every subpoena aspect of all the criminal investigation mess. Meanwhile in the White House "dump" lie time is not gone House impeachment hearings had few Republican spins Chief Justice Roberts comes over as the Senate trial begins.

The Lying King's Directives

"Wherever law ends, tyranny begins."

—John Locke

Let us not to all the right wing hullabaloo and invective fall victim. "Truth is not truth." says 45's personal clown, Gepetto Guiliani, he with rotten runny brown nose as both lackey and adherent to the Lying King's directives. Oh yes! It is an ongoing nitwit narcissist lying battle that sees all the investigations as a hoax and witch hunt with a Kentucky Senator horse on a white Russian saddle

By JOEY CONNOLLY

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



who has won by force but in this game is forced to punt. Democracy is not obstructions fool, though all the lying and obfuscation throw impunity and impediments in its way United States Constitutional law and statutes are not dying but will persevere in honor and strength and win at end of day. If the House of Representatives is wrong and that is proved Then I have never taken a dump nor my bowels ever moved.

12 THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN									
TOL	DAY FRIDAY S		SATU	RDAY	SUNDAY		MONDAY		
<u>کن:</u>			\$	ථ ර			\$ 25.		5
	with isolated theast winds 0 mph.	showers an chance of the Northeast v	owers and a slight showers and a slight showers a		Mostly clou showers at chance of the	nd a slight	Partly cloudy shov		
87°	75°	87º	76°	86°	76°	86°	76°	87º	77°
	YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE								

AGRIHAN WAKE SAIPAN GUAM YAP KOROR CHUUK POHNPEI KOSRAE MAJURO

PICTURE TIME: 12:32 PM, WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 8, 2020 Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

Guam weather radar shows isolated showers moving through the Marianas waters. These showers are associated with a shear line which is currently between Rota and Guam. The VAD wind profile indicates east-northeast winds of 18 to 24 knots through the lowest 7 thousand feet of the air. The buoys reveal combined seas of 8 to 10 feet which are composed of east-southeast trade-wind waves and swells plus a north-northwest swell.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

MICRONESI	▲ ▼°F	
Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	84° / 76°
Palau	Partly Cloudy	84° / 78°
Yap	Partly Cloudy	85° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	84° / 79°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	85° / 79°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°

Majuro	Thunderstorms	85° / 80°
AROUND TH	E GLOBE	≜ ▼°F
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	70° / 61°
Beijing	Sunny	43° / 19°
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	70° / 64°
Honolulu	Windy	80° / 72°
London	Mosty Cloudy	54° / 48°
Los Angeles	Partly Cloudy	77° / 49°
Manila	Partly Cloudy	88° / 75°
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	88° / 72°
Miami	Partly Cloudy	77° / 70°
New York	Partly Cloudy	42° / 24°
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	54° / 43°
Paris	Cloudy	55° / 52°
Busan	Partly Cloudy	46° / 32°
Rome	Sunny	55° / 34°
Salem	Sunny	62° / 36°
San Francisco	Partly Cloudy	53° / 48°
Seoul	Sunny	36° / 21°
Tokyo	Mostly Sunny	57° / 39°
Washington, DC	Windy	44° / 24°



Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

nrough the following:

Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone

 *11 on any IT&E cellular phone
 Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.net

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET						
12:31 AM	LOW TIDE	-0.45				
7:46 AM	HIGH TIDE	1.62				
12:47 PM	LOW TIDE	1.06				
5:45 PM	HIGH TIDE	1.71				

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Friday	6:45 AM	6:02 PM
Saturday	6:45 AM	6:03 PM
Sunday	6:46 AM	6:03 PM
Monday	6:46 AM	6:04 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	4:56 AM	4:33 PM
Friday	-	5:55 AM	5:30 PM
Saturday	-	6:54 AM	6:31 PM
Sunday	-	7:51 AM	7:34 PM
Monday	-	8:46 AM	8:36 PM

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F	LIGHT	SCH	EDULE	AS	OF DE	ECEME	BER 2	, 2019
	DEF	PARTU	RES			A	RRIVAI	_S
SAIPAN	-GUAM (G	GUM)			GUAM (GUM)-SA	IPAN	
UA117 UA105	9:15am 6:20pm		Daily 2, 4, 6		UA174 UA104		8:11am 5:26pm	Daily 2, 4, 6
SAIPAN	-NARITA	(NRT)			NARITA	(NRT)-S	AIPAN	
SKY811	10:15am	3:00pm	Daily		SKY816 SKY816		7:30pm 8:00pm	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7 6
SAIPAN	-BUSAN (PUS)			BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN			
7C3451	3:20am	6:30am	Daily		7C3452 7C3452		2:30am+1 2:30am+1	1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 3
SAIPAN	-SEOUL (I	ICN)			SEOUL ((ICN)-SAI	PAN	
TW308 OZ626 OZ626 OZ626 CZ626 7C3403 OZ6243 OZ624 7C3401 TW310	2:50am 4:35am 3:20pm 3:50pm 4:30pm	6:05am 6:25am 6:40am 8:35am 7:10pm 7:40pm	Daily 1 3, 7 2, 4, 5, 6 Daily 2, 4, 6 1, 3, 5, 7 Daily Daily		OZ6233 OZ623 7C3402 TW309 OZ625 TW307 OZ625 7C3404	8:55am 10:10am 11:10am 7:30pm 7:45pm 8:20pm	1:20pm 2:30pm 3:30pm 4:25pm 1:00am+1 1:05am+1 1:40am+1 3:40am+1	2, 4, 6 1, 3, 5, 7 Daily Daily 7 Daily 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Daily
SAIPAN	-SHANGH	AI (PVG	i)		SHANGI	HAI (PVG))-SAIPAI	V

SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8648 6:10am 8:50am 4,7 3U8647 10:30pm 4:30am+1 3,6

SAIPAN	I-HANGZH	IOU (HG	HANG	HANGZHOU (HGH)-SAIPAN			
JD396	7:30am	12:05pm	1	JD395	8:05am	3:30pm	4
JD396	4:50pm	7:55pm	4	JD395	8:50pm	5:00am+1	7

SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK)				BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN				
MU764	1:30am 6:	:00am	3, 5, 7	MU763	4:50pm	12:30am+1	2, 4, 6	
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)			MANILA (I	VINL)-S	AIPAN			

OZ626/701	2:10am	10:35am	1 via ICN	U
OZ626/701	2:50am	10:35am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN	C
UA117/183	9:15am	9:50pm	Daily via GUM	C
UA117/193	9:15am	11:50pm	2, 5 via GUM-ROR	U
UA156/183	6:20pm	9:50pm	2, 4, 6 via GUM	U
11/156/103	6.20nm	11.50nm	2 via GLIM-ROR	۱

SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG)							
OZ626/721	2:10am	11:50am	1 via ICN				
OZ626/721	2:50am	11:50am	2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN				
UO43	5:40am	8:40am	1, 3, 5, 7				
OZ6243/9661	3:20pm	11:15pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN				
OZ624/9661	3:50pm	11:15pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN				

UA184/174	12:40am	8:11am+1	3, 6 via GUM					
OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN					
OZ702/625	12:05pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICI					
UA192/174	10:40pm	8:11am+1	2, 5 via GUM-ROR					
UA184/174	10:55pm	8:11am+1	1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM					
OZ704/6233	11:45pm	1:20pm+1	1, 3, 5 via ICN					
OZ704/623	11:45pm	2:30pm+1	2, 4, 6, 7 via ICN					
HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN								

	HONG K	2140 (111h	IG) JAIP	AIT
	OZ746/6233	12:35am	1:20pm	2, 4, 6 via ICN
V	OZ746/623	12:35am	2:30pm	1, 3, 5, 7 via ICN
	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:00am+1	7 via ICN
	OZ722/625	1:15pm	1:40am+1	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN
	UO42	6:50pm	1:45am+1	7
	UO42	9:30pm	4:25am+1	2, 4, 6
	I			

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U Sichuan Airlines, 7C Jeju Air, DL Delta Airlines, JD Beijing Capital, UO HK Express, HX HongKong Airlines, MU China Eastern, OZ Asiana Airlines, TW t'way Air, UA United Airlines, BC SkyMark ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. (The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

STAR MARIANAS AIR, INC.

					•					
SAIPAN	TO ROTA			1203	9:00AM	9:15AM	Daily			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1204 1205	10:00AM 11:00AM	10:15AM 11:15AM	Daily Daily			
1301	7:30AM	8:00AM	Daily	1206	12:00PM	12:15PM	Daily			
1302 1303	11:30AM 4:00PM	12:00PM 4:30PM	Daily Daily	1207	1:00PM	1:15PM	Daily			
1000	, i		1208	2:00PM	2:15PM	Daily				
ROTA TO	SAIPAN			1209	3:00PM	3:15PM	Daily			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	1210 1211	4:00PM 5:00PM	4:15PM 5:15PM	Daily Daily			
3101	8:15AM	8:45AM	Daily	1211	6:00PM	6:15PM	Daily			
3102	1:45PM 2:15PM Daily			1212	0.001 111	0.101 111	buny			
3103	4:45PM	5:15PM	Daily	TINIAN TO SAIPAN						
ROTA TO	GUAM			FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2102	7:30AM	7:45AM	Daily			
3401	12:15PM	12:45PM	Daily	2103 2104	8:30AM	8:45AM	Daily			
				2104	9:30AM 10:30AM	9:45AM 10:45AM	Daily Daily			
GUAM TO	D ROTA			2106	11:30AM	11:45AM	Daily			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2107	12:30PM	12:45PM	Daily			
4301	1:00PM	1:30PM	Daily	2108	1:30PM	1:45PM	Daily			
CAIDAN	TO TINIAN			2109	2:30PM	2:45PM	Daily			
				2110	3:30PM	3:45PM	Daily			
FLIGHT #	DEPARTURE	ARRIVAL	FREQUENCY	2111	4:30PM	4:45PM	Daily			
1201 1202	7:00AM 8:00AM	7:15AM 8:15AM	Daily	2112 2113	5:30PM 6:30PM	5:45PM 6:45PM	Daily Daily			
1202	O:UUAIVI	O:13AIVI	Daily	4117	O:SOLIM	U:4JF IVI	vally			

THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 13 SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Business

Christmas Shot competition at MC Café



BEA CABRERA

MC Café owner Elina Gharti Chhetri, left, lines up the Christmas Shot entries while participants Yogi Singh and Jenn Brown look on.

By BEA CABRERA

beacabrerasaipan@gmail.com CORRESPONDENT

business Marianas Creations Café located on Micro Beach Road held their first Christmas Shot competition last month where community members were asked to join and come up with their original Christmas shot.

The Christmas Shot com-

petition was intended to raise funds for the benefit of Saipan Cares for Animals in Koblerville. SCA is a non-profit organization that shelters abandoned dogs and cats, provides care, and medical needs until they get adopted.

A total of nine different types of Christmas shots from participants were presented to tasters. The shots varied from dessert shots to shots with small alcohol content. Participant Yogi Singh emerged as the winner with his entry called Boonie



Many community members showed up to support the MC Cafe Christmas Shot competition held last month as proceeds will go for the

A total of \$226 was raised and according to another participant, Michea Thacker, from Oregon, she didn't think twice about joining when she learned that the end goal is for a good cause. "I am particularly a competitive person but I will do it for a good cause and it makes it so much fun when the proceeds go to a good cause because it's worth it."

"It's great that MC Café sponsors these kinds of events as a lot of people don't have time to volunteer so it makes it easy to be active in the com-

with the turnout of the event. "It was a very unique idea that one of our dearest friend suggested that we do. We just put it out there on short notice and didn't expect a good turnout both participants and tasters."

"We have done many fundraisers for Saipan Cares for Animals and we know they need funds all the time... and we thank the community for finding the time to help other members of the community as this is the real spirit of Christmas—always giving," she added.

Facebook bans deepfakes in fight against online manipulation

LONDON (AP)—Facebook says it is banning "deepfake" videos, the false but realistic clips created with artificial intelligence and sophisticated tools, as it steps up efforts to fight online manipulation. But the policy leaves plenty of loopholes.

The social network said late Monday that it's beefing up its policies for removing videos edited or synthesized in ways that aren't apparent to the average person, and which could dupe someone into thinking the video's subject said something he or she didn't actually say.

Created by artificial intelligence or machine learning, deepfakes combine or replace content to create images that can be almost impossible to tell are not authentic.

"While these videos are still rare on the internet, they present a significant challenge for our industry and society as their use increases," Facebook's vice president of global policy management, Monika Bickert, said in a blog post.

However, she said the new rules won't include parody or satire, or clips edited just mation and "fake news," while also respecting free speech and fending off allegations of censorship.

The U.S. tech company has

been grappling with how to handle the rise of deepfakes after facing criticism last year for refusing to remove a doctored video of House Speaker Nancy Pelosi slurring her words, which was viewed more than 3 million times. Experts said the crudely edited clip was more of a "cheap fake" than a deepfake.

Then, a pair of artists posted fake footage of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg showing him gloating over his oneman domination of the world. Facebook also left that clip online. The company said at the time that neither video violated its policies.

The problem of altered videos is taking on increasing urgency as experts and lawmakers try to figure out how to prevent deepfakes from being used to interfere with the U.S. presidential election in November.

The new policy is a "strong starting point," but doesn't address broader problems, said Sam Gregory, program director at Witness, a nonprofit working on using video technology for human rights.

"The reality is there aren't that many political deepfakes at the moment," he said. "They're mainly nonconsensual sexual images."

The bigger problem is videos that are either shown without context or lightly edited, which some have dubbed "shallow fakes," Gregory said. These include the Pelosi clip

or one that made the rounds last week of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden that was selectively edited to make it appear he made racist remarks.

Gregory, whose group was among those that gave feedback to Facebook for the policy, said that while the new rules look strong on paper, there are questions around how effective the company will be at uncovering synthetic videos.

Facebook has built deepfakedetecting algorithms and can also look at an account's behavior to get an idea of whether it's intention is to spread disinformation. That will give the company an edge over users or journalists in sniffing them out, Gregory said.

But those algorithms haven't been used widely for deepfakes in the wild. "So it is an open question how effective detection will be," he said. "This is an algorithmic kind of game of cat and mouse, where the forgeries will get better alongside the detection."

Facebook said any videos, deepfake or not, will also be removed if they violate existing standards for nudity, graphic violence or hate speech. Those that aren't removed can still be reviewed by independent third-party fact-checkers and any deemed false will be flagged as such to people trying to share or view them, which Bickert said was a better approach than just taking them down.

Pharmacies say prescribers bear opioid crisis responsibility

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP)— Doctors and other healthcare practitioners who write prescriptions bear ultimate responsibility for improper distribution of opioids to patients, not pharmacists who are obliged to fill those prescrip-

tions, a series of pharmacy

chains argued in federal court. The filings, which were submitted Monday to the federal judge in Cleveland who has been overseeing the national opioid lawsuits, asked the judge to rule in the pharmacies' favor and reject claims brought by some Ohio counties. The judge has scheduled an October trial for claims against CVS, Rite Aid, Walgreens, HBC and Discount Drug Mart.

Officials from Summit and Cuyahoga counties, home to Akron and Cleveland respectively, allege that pharmacies contributed to the addictions crisis by filling prescriptions for an "excessive volume" of opioids written by doctors and

other practitioners.

Such allegations ignore the role that cash-for-medication "pill mills" played, along with Internet pharmacies, independent pharmacies, clinics and others, the filings said. In many cases, those entities dispensed medications in greater volume than the chains being sued are accused of doing, the pharmacies said.

allegations Cuyahoga and Summit counties also ignore the fact that pharmacies dispensed drugs based on doctors' prescriptions, who ultimately must bear responsibility, Monday's filing said. All those prescriptions were written by practitioners authorized by the state of Ohio and registered with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration, according to the pharmacies.

"A prescription for a controlled substance is an order for a medication that may be issued only by a physician or other authorized health-

care practitioner," lawyers for the pharmacy chains argued. "While pharmacists are highly trained and licensed professionals, they did not attend medical school and are not trained as physicians."

Attorneys leading the opioid lawsuits said Tuesday their goal continues to be holding pharmacies accountable for not meeting requirements to actively prevent the diversion and abuse of prescription painkillers.

Pharmacies saw the devastating consequences of this public health crisis firsthand and we will show they did little to nothing to address them," the attorneys said in a statement.

The judge was scheduled to hear a broader case last year, but most parties settled. Talks continue toward a possible national settlement that could end all the lawsuits related to the epidemic, which has killed more than 400,000 in the U.S. since 2000.

to change the order of words. The exceptions underscore the balancing act Facebook and other social media services face in their struggle to stop the spread of online misinfor-

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Payless Superfresh & Truckload Store















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VARIETIES





FAMILY

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Nation

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Donald Trump on Tuesday backed away from his threats to target Iranian cultural sites if Iran retaliates against the U.S. for killing one of its top generals.

Targeting cultural sites is a war crime.

After first tweeting the threat and later reiterating it to reporters as he flew back to Washington over the weekend, Trump retreated Tuesday, saying, "I like to obey the law."

But he still sounded offended by the idea that such sites would be off limits during armed conflict.

"Think of it," Trump said during an Oval Office appearance. "They kill our people. They blow up our people. And then we have to be very gentle with their cultural institutions?"

Trump added: "But I'm OK with it. It's OK with me." He then issued yet another stern warning to Iran to stand down, saying, "If Iran does anything they shouldn't be doing, they are going to be suffering the consequences, and very strongly."

On Monday, Defense Secretary Mike Esper had distanced the Pentagon from Trump's threats to bomb Iranian cultural sites despite international prohibitions on such activity.

Esper said the U.S. will "follow the laws of armed conflict." Asked if that ruled out targeting cultural sites, Esper pointedly added, "That's the laws of armed conflict."

It all began over the weekend when Trump tweeted Saturday that if Iran attacked any American assets to avenge the



TRUMP RETREATS from threat to attack Iranian cultural sites

killing of Iranian Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the U.S. had 52 targets across the Islamic Republic that "WILL BE HIT VERY FAST AND VERY HARD."

He added that some are "important to Iran & Iranian culture."

Anger spread quickly across Iran, and Trump repeated the threat to reporters traveling with him as he flew back to Washington on Sunday after spending two weeks at his Florida resort.

Tensions between the U.S. and Iran escalated sharply after Trump ordered a drone strike in Iraq that killed Soleimani, head of Iran's powerful Quds Force. The U.S. has said Soleimani was killed because he was making plans to attack American diplomats

and service members in the Middle East.

Targeting cultural sites is a war crime under the 1954 Hague Convention for their protection. Separately, in 2017, the U.N. Security Council unanimously passed a resolution condemning the destruction of heritage sites. Attacks by the Islamic State group and other armed fac-

tions in Syria and Iraq prompted that vote.

UNESCO, the United Nations' cultural agency, has called on governments to remember that cultural sites are not targets.

U.N. Secretary-General Antonio Guterres stressed the importance of the world's cultural heritage at Tuesday's longplanned opening of an exhibition sponsored by Italy's U.N. Mission of masterpieces that had been stolen and recovered.

"It has been painful to see how much of mankind's cultural heritage has been lost in recent years from Iraq and Syria to Yemen, Mali and Afghanistan," Guterres said. "Indeed, we face an array of challenges that imperil efforts to protect our common heritage from the climate crisis to civil unrest, from armed conflict to terrorism."

The U.N. chief made no mention of Trump but stressed that international cooperation must continue to preserve humanity's treasures.

Trump's tweet also caused concern in Washington. One U.S. national security official said the threat against Iranian cultural sites had caught many in his administration off-guard and prompted calls for others in his government, including Secretary of State Mike Pompeo, to clarify the matter. The official, who was not authorized to speak publicly to the issue, called such a clarification necessary to affirm that the U.S. military would not intentionally commit war crimes.

When asked about the president's tweet, Pompeo said Sunday that the U.S. will "behave" within the law. Questioned about the matter again Tuesday, Pompeo said every action taken by the U.S. "will be consistent with the international rule of law," though he did not specifically rule out Iranian cultural sites.

He then blamed Iran for damaging its culture.

McConnell says he has votes to set rules for Trump's trial

WASHINGTON (AP)—Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said he has the votes to start President Donald Trump's impeachment trial as soon as House Speaker Nancy Pelosi releases the documents, winning support from GOP senators to postpone a decision on calling witnesses.

The announcement Tuesday was significant, enabling McConnell to bypass for now Democratic demands for new testimony as he launches the third impeachment trial in the nation's history. It could begin this week if Pelosi sends the articles of impeachment to the Senate.

But Pelosi gave little indication of her next move. She cut short an impeachment discussion with her leadership team Tuesday night at the Capitol when an aide handed her a note about the crisis unfolding in the Middle East. She asked Democrats to "pray," according to a lawmaker at the closed-door session.

Pelosi appears in no rush to transmit the articles of impeachment as Democrats push to hear from more witnesses but Mc-Connell focuses Republicans on a strategy for speedy acquittal. The Senate can't start the proceedings until the charges against Trump are sent.

"We have the votes," Mc-Connell told reporters about his proposal that would set the rules for a trial and would be modeled after President Bill Clinton's impeachment 20 years ago. He said the question of new witnesses and documents will be addressed later "and not before the trial begins."

The contours of a Senate trial have been in dispute for weeks. Pelosi is delaying transmission of the articles as Democrats press for testimony from former national security adviser John Bolton and other new witnesses.

"Sadly, Leader McConnell has made clear that his loyalty is to the President and not the Constitution," Pelosi wrote to colleagues late Tuesday. She said the process he is outlining "is not only unfair but designed to deprive Senators and the American people of crucial documents and testimony."

Pelosi told House leaders Tuesday she believed the strategy was working, according to those in the private meeting. Shecalled on McConnell to "immediately" reveal the details of his proposal.

"People are united," said Democratic Rep. Mike Thompson of California about the mood in the House caucus.

McConnell has resisted calling new witnesses and expects the trial to end with the GOP Senate majority voting to acquit the president of the charges, and without Trump's removal from office.

The GOP leader told senators at their closed-door lunch Tuesday that he has support for his plan. It would start the trial first and postpone votes on witnesses until later in the process.

ACROSS THE NATION

1 dead, 5 rescued from avalanche at Idaho ski area

KELLOGG, Idaho (AP)—An avalanche at an Idaho ski resort killed one person Tuesday, and rescuers dug out five others who had minor injuries, officials said. Silver Mountain Resort confirmed the death and injuries in a Facebook post. Searchers were still combing through the snow with probes and rescue dogs, resort officials said. "The staff at Silver Mountain extend their deepest sympathies to the family of the individual," the post said. "Out of respect of the person's family and their privacy, no further details will be released at this time." The Shoshone County Sheriff's Office said earlier that it had received reports of up to three separate avalanches on the mountain just south of the city of Kellogg in northern Idaho. The sheriff's office said it got calls about three people possibly trapped. It later said four people had been recovered in the avalanche area, while searchers kept looking. The avalanche happened about 11 a.m. in the Wardner Peak area, which is rated the most difficult to ski, Silver Mountain officials said. An avalanche warning has been in effect in higher elevations of multiple north Idaho counties, KHQ-TV reported.

Mexico former top cop in NY plea talks over drug bribe case

NEW YORK (AP)—Mexican former top se-

curity official Genaro García Luna is in talks on a possible plea agreement with federal prosecutors in New York, where he is charged with accepting millions in drug-money bribes from the notorious Sinaloa cartel of convicted kingpin Joaquín "El Chapo" Guzmán. A court document filed Monday says lawyers for García Luna and prosecutors are engaged in negotiations, "which they believe are likely to result in a disposition of this case without trial," according to the filing signed by García Luna, his lawyer, a prosecutor and magistrate Judge Peggy Kuo. García Luna, 51, was indicted in New York on three counts of cocaine trafficking conspiracy and a false statements charge. He pleaded not guilty on Friday. Kuo ordered him detained after Assistant U.S. Attorney Erin Reid argued he would pose an "unacceptable risk of flight" if released. Garcia Luna's lawyer, Cesar de Castro, said he would ask the court at a later date for his client to be granted bail. De Castro declined to comment on the plea negotiations in an email to The Associated Press. The former security chief was viewed as the point man for Mexico's drug war under then-President Felipe Calderón, who governed from 2006 to 2012. U.S. prosecutors alleged in a court filing this month that García Luna had accepted "tens of millions of dollars" in bribes—often briefcases full of cash—to protect the cartel.

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Asia

Storms bring relief and danger to Australian wildfires

CANBERRA, Australia

(AP)—Thunderstorms and showers brought some relief for firefighters battling deadly wildfires across Australia's drought-parched east coast on Wednesday, but also raised concerns that lightning will spark more fires before dangerous hot and windy conditions return.

Around 2,300 firefighters in New South Wales state were making the most of relatively benign conditions by frantically consolidating containment lines around more than 110 blazes and patrolling for lightning strikes, state Rural Fire Service Commissioner Shane Fitzsimmons said.

"Unfortunately with lightning strikes, it's not always the next day they pop up," Fitzsimmons told the Australian Broadcasting Corp.

"They can smolder around in trees and in root systems for a couple of days and pop up under drier, hotter conditions, so we are very mindful of that as we head into Friday," he added.

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like Chrome, Safari, Firefox or Internet Explorer 9 or later.

Map locates detected fires in Australia.

The unprecedented fire crisis in southeast Australia that has killed 25 people, destroyed 2,000 homes and shrouded major cities in smoke has focused many Australians on how the nation adapts to climate change. Prime Minister Scott Morrison has faced fierce criticism both domesti-

cally and internationally for downplaying the need for his government to address climate change, which experts say helps supercharge the blazes.

The center-left opposition Labor Party has made political capital from the crisis by promising more ambitious policies than the ruling conservative coalition to tackle climate change. Opposition climate spokesman Mark Butler wants the government to allow a debate on climate change in Parliament when it returns in February

"Hopefully we could fashion a bipartisan position," Butler told ABC. The two sides last held a bipartisan position on climate change in 2007, and have remained bitterly divided ever since on issues such as making carbon polluters pay for their emissions.

Labor had pledged to reduce Australia's greenhouse gas

ic. A New Delhi court sched-

In this photo provided by the Australian Department of Defence on Jan. 6, 2020, HMAS Adelaide is anchored off Eden and is positioned to assist with wildfires.

emissions by 45% below 2005 levels by 2030 and achieve zero emissions by 2050 if it had won last year's elections.

The coalition government has committed to reduce emissions by 26% to 28% by 2030 and warns that Labor's more ambitious target would wreck the economy. The government argues that Australia is responsible for only 1.3% of global emissions and more ambitious targets would not ease the current fire crisis, which follows Australia's hottest and driest year on record.

The unfolding disaster in Australia, which is likely to continue throughout the Southern Hemisphere summer, has galvanized calls for more global action on climate change.

Elton John and actor Chris Hemsworth are among the celebrities donating big bucks to help aid the firefighting efforts. Hemsworth, an Australian who lives in the drought-affected New South Wales town of Byron Bay, wrote on Twitter that he was donating \$1 million and asked his followers to show support. "Every penny counts," he wrote.

John announced during his Farewell Yellow Brick Road concert in Sydney on Tuesday that he will also donate \$1 million. The singer said he wanted to bring attention to the devastation that wildfires have caused, saying it has reached a "biblical scale."

Hemworth and John joins a growing list of celebrities, including Pink, Nicole Kidman and Keith Urban, who have pledged to donate toward relief efforts.

Prince Charles, who is next in line to become the British monarch and king of Australia, said in a video message from Scotland that he and his wife Camilla had been in despair watching the infernos burn across Australia.

ASIAN BRIEFS

Hong Kong leader says new year will be a challenging one

HONG KONG (AP)—

Hong Kong Chief Executive Carrie Lam said Tuesday that the city faces multiple challenges in the new year, including violence, economic tribulation and a health scare as anti-government protests enter their eighth month. But the government is determined to overcome these challenges, Lam said. Her administration's reluctance to concretely address political demands has angered demonstrators, who have called for electoral reforms and an independent investigation into accusations of police brutality. When asked again about such an inquiry at a news conference Tuesday, Lam said, "We do not need to go down this road." The mass protests began in June to oppose proposed extradition legislation that would have allowed Hong Kong residents to be sent to stand trial in mainland China, where activists are routinely jailed. While Lam has since withdrawn the bill, demonstrations have continued around broader democratic demands, fueled by a distrust of the Communist Party-ruled central govern-

ment in Beijing. A former

British colony, Hong Kong was returned to China in 1997 under the framework of "one country, two systems," which promises the territory certain rights not afforded to the mainland. At Tuesday's news conference, Lam also sought to quell fears around a respiratory illness that may have infected some Hong Kong residents who recently traveled to the central mainland city of Wuhan, where 59 patients are being treated for a form of pneumonia whose cause has not been deter-

Pakistani air force jet crashes in training, 2 pilots killed

MULTAN, Pakistan (AP)— Pakistan's air force said one if its aircraft crashed during training Tuesday in the eastern Punjab province, killing the two pilots. The FT-7 jet trainer went down in an open area and caused no damage on the ground, the air force statement said. It said an investigation had been opened to determine the cause of the crash, which took place near the district of Mianwali, 300 kilometers (186.41 miles) from the city of Lahore. Pakistani authorities rarely release details of military training crashes, which are relatively

common. Last July, 19 people died when a Pakistani military aircraft crashed into a residential area on the outskirts of the garrison city of Rawalpindi, most of them in their homes. Pakistan's air force has been on high alert since last February, when India launched airstrikes inside Pakistan. The strikes targeted Pakistan-based militants responsible for a suicide bombing that killed 40 Indian troops in Indian-administered portion of Kashmir. At the time, Pakistan retaliated and shot down two Indian air force planes. One Indian pilot was captured and later released. But tensions have continued to remain high between the two nuclear-armed neighbors over the disputed Kashmir region, which is divided between them and claimed by both in its entirety.

India sets 2012 gang rape convicts' executions for Jan. 22

NEW DELHI (AP)—A death warrant was issued Tuesday for the four men convicted in the 2012 gang rape and murder of a young woman on a New Delhi bus that galvanized protests across India and brought global attention to the country's sexual violence epidem-

uled the hangings for Jan. 22, the Press Trust of India news agency reported. The warrant has been anticipated since India's Supreme Court rejected one of the men's final review pleas last month. India's president can still intercede, but that is not expected to happen. The victim, a 23-yearold physiotherapy student whom Indian media dubbed "Nirbhaya," or "Fearless," because Indian law prohibits rape victims from being identified, was heading home with a male friend from a movie theater when six men lured them onto a bus. With no one else in sight, they beat the man with a metal bar, raped the woman and used the bar to inflict massive internal injuries to her. The pair were dumped naked on the roadside, and the woman died two weeks later. The assailants were tried relatively quickly in a country where sexual assault cases often languish for years. Four defendants were sentenced to death. Another hanged himself in prison before his trial began, though his family insists he was killed. The sixth assailant was a minor at the time of the December 2012 attack and was sentenced to three years in a reform home.

Muslims in fear as police crack down in India's heartland

MEERUT, India (AP)—Sometimes Arshad Hussain disappears. He will be sitting on the bed, watching relatives, neighbors and journalists pour into his house when suddenly scenes of his dead son wash over him.

"I find myself on the street, staring at the concrete path where my son bled to death," he said quietly, leaning against the exposed brick walls of his house in Nehtaur, a small north Indian town about 190 kilometers (120 miles) from New Delhi.

His 20-year-old son, Anas Ahmad, was among 16 Muslims killed across the state of Uttar Pradesh on Dec. 20, the deadliest day in unrelenting violence that has engulfed India for almost a month. The victims included an 8-year-old boy.

Tens of thousands of people have taken to the streets to oppose a new law that grants a path to citizenship for immigrants of every religion except Islam. Many say the law, passed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Hindu-nationalist government, discriminates against Muslims and undermines the country's secular foundations.

The government, saying the protests are orchestrated by its opponents, has responded by banning gatherings of more than four people, partially

shutting down the internet to make it more difficult to organize and detaining activists. Police have used baton charges, tear gas and sometimes live ammunition against protesters, leaving at least 23 dead nationwide.

The crackdown has been the harshest in the heartland state of Uttar Pradesh, where Muslims comprise 20% of the population of 200 million.

Relatives of eight of the 16 people who died on Dec. 20 told the AP that their family members had been killed by police fire. Police deny using guns, but a smartphone video seen by the AP shows an officer firing at protesters in Meerut and residents of the city said they saw police firing weapons that day.

Five people died in Meerut, the highest toll anywhere that day. The city, about 80 kilometers (50 miles) northeast of New Delhi, was teeming with people marching toward a market intersection to protest after Friday prayers, residents said.

At first, people emerged from the city's narrow lanes in twos and threes. A crowd of 30 to 40 formed. Half an hour later, the number had risen to the hundreds. By the time police arrived in protective gear, the gathering had become a buzzing congregation.

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World

Iran strikes back at US with missile attack at bases in Iraq

TEHRAN, Iran (AP)—Iran struck back at the United States early Wednesday for killing a top Revolutionary Guards commander, firing a series of ballistic missiles at two military bases in Iraq housing American troops in a major escalation between the two longtime foes.

Iranian state TV said it was in revenge for the U.S. killing of Revolutionary Guard Gen. Qassem Soleimani, whose death last week in an American drone strike near Baghdad prompted angry calls to avenge his slaying. A U.S.

official said there were no immediate reports of American casualties, though buildings were still being searched.

The strikes, which came as Iran buried Soleimani, raised fears that the two longtime foes were closer to war. But there were some indications that there would not be further retaliation on either side, at least in the short term.

'All is well!' President Donald Trump tweeted shortly after the missile attacks, adding, 'So far, so good' regarding casualties. Moments earlier, Iran's foreign minister tweeted that Tehran had taken "& concluded proportionate measures in self-defense," adding that Tehran did "not seek escalation" but would defend itself against further aggression.

Soleimani's killing and the strikes by Iran came as tensions have been rising steadily across the Mideast after Trump's decision to unilaterally withdraw America from Tehran's nuclear deal with world powers. They also marked the first time in recent years that Washington and Tehran have attacked each other directly rather than

through proxies in the region. It raised the chances of open conflict erupting between the two enemies, who have been at odds since Iran's 1979 Islamic Revolution and the subsequent U.S. Embassy takeover and hostage crisis.

Iran initially announced only one strike, but U.S. officials confirmed both. U.S. defense officials were at the White House, likely to discuss options with Trump, who launched the attack on Soleimani while facing an upcoming impeachment trial in the Senate,

Iran's Revolutionary Guard warned the U.S. and its regional allies against retaliating over the missile attack against the Ain al-Asad air base in Iraq's western Anbar province. The Guard issued the warning via a statement carried by Iran's state-run IRNA news agency.

"We are warning all American allies, who gave their bases to its terrorist army, that any territory that is the starting point of aggressive acts against Iran will be targeted," the Guard said. It also threatened Israel.

After the strikes, a former Iranian nuclear negotiator posted a picture of the Islamic Republic's flag on Twitter, appearing to mimic Trump who posted an American flag following the killing of Soleimani and others Friday.

Ain al-Asad air base was

first used by American forces after the 2003 U.S.-led invasion that toppled dictator Saddam Hussein, and later saw American troops stationed there amid the fight against the Islamic State group in Iraq and Syria. It houses about 1,500 U.S. and coalition forces.

Two Iraqi security officials said at least one of the missiles appeared to have struck a plane at the base, igniting a fire. It was not immediately clear whether it was an Iraqi or U.S. jet. There were no immediate reports of casualties from the attacks, according to the officials, who spoke on condition of anonymity as they had no permission to brief journalists.

About 70 Norwegian troops also were on the air base but no injuries were reported, Brynjar Stordal, a spokesperson for the Norwegian Armed Forces told



Russia's Putin visits Syria to meet Assad, a key Iran ally

DAMASCUS, Syria (AP)—Russian President Vladimir Putin traveled to Damascus on Tuesday for a meeting with President Bashar Assad, a rare visit that comes amid soaring tensions between Iran and United States following the U.S. drone strike that killed a top Iranian general.

While the official statements made during the previously unannounced visit made no mention of the killing last week of Gen. Qassem Soleimani, the timing was conspicuous.

The U.S. strike that killed Soleimani minutes after he landed in Iraq has drawn vows of retaliation from Tehran and its proxy militias in Baghdad and Beirut. It has also led the U.S. to re-position its troops in Iraq following calls by the Iraqi Parliament and prime minister for U.S. forces to leave the country.

Soleimani led Iran-backed forces supporting Assad in Syria's civil war and played

a key role in shoring up his army. With some 600 American troops deployed in Syria, the country is a potential site of conflict with Iran.

Putin's visit is the second to the country during the war, where his troops have been fighting alongside Syrian government forces since 2015. It comes amid a crushing Russian-backed offensive by Syrian forces on the northwestern province of Idlib, the last rebel stronghold in Syria.

Putin and Assad met at a Russian command post in Damascus, and were presented with military reports on the situation in different regions of Syria, said Kremlin spokesman Dmitry Peskov.

In his conversation with Assad, Putin said that a lot has been done toward restoring Syria's statehood and territorial integrity. "The situation didn't just change—in fact, we're witnessing the restoration of Syria's statehood, Syria as a

state, the country's territorial integrity," Putin said in video of the meeting released by Syria's state news agency SANA.

At the same time, Putin noted that the situation in the Middle East "is, unfortunately, escalating."

During his time in Damascus, Putin visited the Syrian capital's landmark Umayyad Mosque in the walled Old City together, where he viewed the tomb of John the Baptist who is sacred to both Christians and Muslims.

Putin's visit coincided with Russian Orthodox Christmas, and Putin congratulated his troops on the holiday, according to a statement from Assad's office. Photos released by SANA showed the two leaders visiting an orthodox cathedral in Damascus.

Russia joined the war in 2015, when the Syrian military appeared close to collapse. Since then, and largely because of Russia's blanket air support,

the Syrian government has largely won the nearly 9-year civil war militarily, and has retaken control of most of the country from rebel fighters.

In recent weeks, Syrian troops supported by Russian warplanes have been pushing into the country's last rebel stronghold, located in northwestern Idlib province.

The last time Putin came to Syria was in 2017 when he announced a scale-back of the Russian military presence there. At the time, rebels were still entrenched on the outskirts of Damascus, and he only visited Russia's Hemeimeem air base in Syria's coastal province of Latakia. Assad previously visited Russia and met with Putin in May 2018, November 2017 and October 2015.

Close to half a million people have been killed in Syria's civil war and 11 million have been displaced from their homes, including 5 million who are refugees outside the country.

Spain's Sanchez wins cliffhanger confidence to form government

MADRID (AP)—Spain's Socialist leader Pedro Sánchez scraped through a confidence vote Tuesday with hard-fought support from smaller parties, allowing him to form a new leftist coalition government and end almost a year of political limbo in the eurozone's fourth-largest economy.

Sánchez's cliffhanger victory by just two votes in parliament—the final tally was 167-165, with 18 abstentions—was the slimmest for a prime minister candidate in decades. The left-wing United We Can party will be a junior partner in the coalition.

Sánchez needed the votes or abstention promise of an array of smaller parties to get past. His supporters in parliament erupted into a standing ovation when the result of the vote was announced in the Chamber of Deputies.

The hair-line margin of victory has raised doubts about how long the coalition government will last, as its policies require regular parliamentary approval. A government term is normally four years. Arrayed against Sánchez 's administration will be three main right-of-center parties.

Coalition governments are common in Europe, but it is Spain's first since the country returned to democracy in 1978, three years after the death of long-time dictator Gen. Francisco Franco.

"A progressive coalition is

going to govern because that is what Spaniards decided," Sánchez told the house be-

Sánchez, 47, has been caretaker prime minister since early last year.

fore the vote.

He is expected to sworn in Wednesday and hold his first Cabinet meeting of ministers Friday.

Sánchez's Socialists won two consecutive general elections in 2019, but both times they failed to capture a parliamentary majority. That meant they couldn't win the parliamentary confidence vote that is required before taking office.

In weeks of negotiations since the last election in November, Sánchez mustered enough support—or promises to abstain—from a handful of small regional parties to take power.

Andrew Dowling, an expert on Spanish contemporary politics at Cardiff University in Wales, said Sanchez attained power through "a very fragile agreement" with other parties and will now be "subject to intense political pressure" by his right-of-center political opponents.

"They're not going to give any quarter to this new government (which has) a very, very fragile majority. They are going to use all means necessary to prevent this government passing legislation," Dowling said in a telephone interview. SAIPAN TRIBUNE THURSDAY, JANUARY 9, 2020 **19**

Environment

By HAL BERNTON THE SEATTLE TIMES

TELLER, Alaska—An unpaved highway runs north out of Nome, carving through more than 70 lonely miles of tundra before dead-ending at this Inupiaq village.

Maintenance crews keep the route open during the summer months. The work has become increasingly costly as a layer of ice and frozen dirt under the road softens into soggy muck, and stretches of road bed crack and collapse.

"There is so much melting. We just keep having to haul in gravel," said Calvin Schaeffer, of the Alaska state Department of Transportation.

Alaska's permafrost is under assault from a warming climate, and it's happening a lot faster than anticipated. Hillside slopes have liquefied, unleashing slides that end up as muddy deltas in salmon streams. The ground under the Nome airport runway key to linking the community to the outside world — has thawed, requiring costly patches. And during the hottest July on record, a sinkhole 14 feet deep opened along a main roadway in the city.

For a region where climate change also is bringing profound changes offshore, these are disruptive developments. As the northern Bering Sea warms, bird and marine mammal die-offs are on the rise and winter ice is on the decline, enabling storms to gain strength over open water and slam into coastal communities like Teller.

The accelerating melt is a global concern: Permafrost, which mostly lies in the northern reaches of the planet, is a vast carbon storehouse of frozen plants and animals that release greenhouse gases as they warm and decompose.

Fossil fuel combustion still is the main source of green-house gas emissions driving climate change. But the world's permafrost now releases 1.2 to 2.2 million metric tons each year — at the upper end, nearly equal to Japan's greenhouse gas emissions, according to a report this month by the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. Later this century, these emissions are expected to exceed those of the United States.

Scientists who study permafrost already are noticing some striking changes in Alaska's landscape.

Canadian scientist Merritt Turetsky monitors tracts of interior Alaska permafrost that a decade ago were covered by spruce forest. That land is now covered with lakes.

"It can happen super quick-



As climate change melts Alaska's permafrost, ROADS SINK, BRIDGES TILT AND GREENHOUSE GASES RELEASE

ly, even in a matter of months.
... This has been a wake-up call to the climate-science community," Turetsky said.
"What has been happening at some of our field sites is a whole different ballgame."

Permafrost's footprint on Alaska is forecast to shrink substantially in the decades ahead. By the century's end, even on Alaska's North Slope, the ground is expected to thaw 65 feet down, according to University of Alaska Fairbanks research.

This reflects what scientists say is a critical shift in the planet's northern realms. In the past, permafrost regions, on balance, absorbed carbon dioxide through summer plant growth. But the NOAA report noted that northern regions are now a net contributor to greenhouse gas emissions as the permafrost thaw quickens.

In Alaska, the permafrost retreat requires a fundamental rethinking of the fate of things built on top of it.

Oil pipelines, drilling pads and other structures will need to be shored up as ice-rich permafrost melts and the ground sags. In towns such as Nome, the changes in permafrost already pose a headache for homeowners, who must level house foundations that tilt as the climate warms.

And how much will it cost to maintain Alaska's roads, bridges and airports — and

how long will they last? Some, if built on permafrost that is mostly ice, could suffer catastrophic failures.

"The big thing to me is the life span of these projects," said Jeff Currey, a state transportation department materials engineer. "The permafrost reality, in some places where you have massive ice, the roads ... disappear. And that's something that we have a hard time grasping."

Some permafrost is largely gravel, so there's not much movement when it melts. Some is a mix of ice and soil, a kind of landscape glue that, once warmed, can cause hill-sides to come apart. Some permafrost consists of nearly pure ice wedges that leave behind big depressions when they turn into water.

Charlie Lean, a retired fishery biologist raised in Nome, says the changes can be startling.

On a moose hunt, he found a river that once flowed clear was running cloudy because of glacial silt picked up by meltwater from the permafrost. In places once dominated by shrubs, cottonwoods — which die if their roots freeze — have found enough continually thawed soil to sometimes grow into 6-foot trees.

Just walking across some stretches of ground can be a different experience from his youth.

"It's getting lots of hum-

mocks and little rivulets, and it's much rougher," Lean said.

Vladimir Romanovsky, geophysicist at the University of Alaska Fairbanks, says the pace of the thawing in Northwest Alaska appears to have quickened during the past half decade, which has included intense summer rains that can soften the ground, as well as a dry spell this past summer that included tundra fires.

In some places, shallow layers of permafrost have disappeared. In others, the ground could continue to sink for decades, continually destabilizing whatever is built up top.

"It's a long process, and a painful process," Romanovsky said.

Over the summer, the Alaska state Department of Transportation spent \$4.5 million repairing the Nome runway, which was built in a hurry during World War II on permafrost terrain that is now settling in a process aggravated by groundwater seeping from a nearby river. The fix is expected to last three to five years as the ground continues to settle.

Coastal villages face a triple threat: rising sea levels, a loss of winter ice that once helped protect them from storms, and thawing permafrost.

"The tundra where we have been picking (berries) for the past 20 years — the ground just caved and my leg sank in," said Denise Topkok, a council member in Teller. The village, born more than a century ago as a gold-rush boom town, is now a Native community of about 235 people.

The sea is eroding a protective coastal bluff of softening soil, threatening a cemetery where the grave markers already lean at sharp angles due to the warming ground.

In the low-lying area, the sea is held at bay by a makeshift wall of gravel-filled oil drums and an assortment of rusting engine blocks, truck axles and other equipment. But it's not sufficient. Teller has suffered repeated flooding.

Through the years, more than 30 houses have been built on higher ground, and more families would like to relocate there.

Teller is one of 31 Alaska villages listed in a Government Accountability Office report as "imminently threatened by flooding and erosion."

Some of these villages are in more dire straits. There is keen competition for federal funds, and Alaska is having new money troubles. State government is largely funded by taxes and royalties on oil production, which has been in long-term decline. Oil production in 2018 was down 75% from a 1988 peak.

To cope with financial shortfalls, Republican Gov. Mike Dunleavy, a former school administrator from Northwest Alaska, has slashed state budgets and declined to dip into a more than \$64 billion oil-wealth savings account known as the Permanent Fund — that kicks out dividends to every Alaska resident.

The scope of Dunleavy's cuts has stirred a fierce political backlash, including a recall petition now the focal point of a court battle.

Over the long term, Dunleavy, a staunch ally of President Donald Trump, is hoping for major new oil finds in North Slope areas such as the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge that Congress in 2017 opened for oil exploration. Even with climate-change costs mounting, there is plenty of support for such an industry expansion in a state that has long been a Republican stronghold. But more Alaskans now acknowledge the impacts of fossil fuel development.

"Maybe Al Gore was right about climate change," said Darrin Otton, manager of the Nome Airport.

"And we've got to get Donald Trump to make a trip up here," responded Schaeffer, the road-maintenance supervisor.

Dunleavy believes "there is no question" Alaska is warming, and that "carbon dioxide emissions may hold a key," according to a statement to The Seattle Times. But he does not think it is "feasible or practical" to end oil and gas production and, in September remarks reported by the Juneau Empire, he talked of the benefits of climate change, such as increased maritime trade through northern waters once clogged with ice.

Nome has seen a surge of maritime traffic. Since 2007, the annual number of vessels docking at the port has more than tripled. This year, a record 13 cruise ships dropped anchor, disgorging hundreds of passengers for brief tours of Nome's fabled main street, the end point for the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Nome also is a port of call for sailors pulled north in hopes of navigating the Northeast Passage that runs through Arctic waters off Russia to Europe, or the Northwest Passage that runs through Canadian waters to the Atlantic.

In August, a berth inside the breakwater was claimed by the Pangaea, a slender 105-foot sailboat with a hull fortified to push through ice.

The boat is owned by Mike Horn, a South African-born explorer who has made marathon expeditions all over the globe, including a 2006 ski journey from Russia to the North Pole in the company of Norwegian Børge Ousland.

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Life & Style

Celebs donate millions to help

Australia wildfire efforts

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Elton John and Chris Hemsworth are among the celebrities donating big bucks for relief efforts as wildfires engulf Australia.

Hemsworth, the Australian actor who plays Thor in the Marvel movie franchise, took to social media Monday to share that he will donate \$1 million and asked his millions of followers to show support as well. He said that "every penny counts."

So far, the wildfires have scorched an area twice the size of the U.S. state of Maryland. The blazes have killed 25 people and destroyed 2,000 homes. The fires, fueled by drought and the country's hottest and driest year on record, have been raging since September, months earlier than is typical for Australia's annual wildfire season.

John announced during his Farewell Yellow Brick Road

concert in Sydney, Australia, that he will also donate \$1 million. The singer said he wanted to bring attention to the devastation that wildfires have caused, saying it has reached a "biblical scale."

Hemsworth and John join a growing list of celebrities who have pledged to donate toward relief efforts, including Nicole Kidman, Pink and Keith Urban.

"I am totally devastated watching what is happening in Australia right now with the horrific bushfires," Pink wrote in a recent social media post. "I am pledging a donation of \$500,000 directly to the local fire services that are battling so hard on the frontlines. My heart goes out to our friends and family in Oz."

Metallica announced a donation on Tuesday night of \$750,000 to a firefighting agency and emergency services agency in Victoria.

An emotional Rose Byrne,

who is Australian, spoke about the crisis and the relief efforts on Tuesday night at the New York premiere of her movie "Like a Boss."

"Really what people need is just donations because it's all volunteer based, the firefighters and all the rural services and the wildlife services trying to rescue the animals," she told The Associated Press.

She added: "It's devastating. It's such a beautiful country. There's always drought but this is the hottest year on record and they need rain but a lot of rain, not just a little bit which is what's happening now. They need like a downpour, downpour and it's just getting hotter and it's getting more and more out of control. It's a climate crisis is what it is."

At the Golden Globes on Sunday, Phoebe Waller-Bridge said she would auction off her Globe outfit and have the proceeds go to firefighter relief.



Jury selection in Weinstein case could prove to be drawn-out

NEW YORK (AP)—On Sunday, Harvey Weinstein was a punchline at the Golden Globes. On Monday, he was hit with new sex-crimes charges in Los Angeles. And on Tuesday, he and his lawyers walked into court in New York to begin

picking the jury that will decide the fate of the man widely seen as the biggest monster of the #MeToo movement.

Selecting the jury for the Hollywood mogul's rape and sexual assault trial is likely to be a painstaking, weekslong process, made complicated by the high stakes, heavy publicity and public revulsion toward him.

In fact, one-third of the first 120 prospective jurors summoned for the case were promptly sent home after the judge asked if there was anyone who could not be impartial and about 40 hands went up.

Weinstein's lawyers unsuccessfully tried to delay jury selection in light of the new case filed in Los Angeles, asking for a "cooling-off period" to allow the publicity to subside.

Producers, directors guild nominations winnow Oscar field

NEW YORK (AP)—An unusually busy day in a truncated awards season for Hollywood left five films—Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time ... in Hollywood," Sam "1917," Martin Mendes' Scorsese's "The Irishman,"

Bong Joon Ho's "Parasite" and Taika Waititi's "Joio Rabbit"—at the head of the Oscar pack.

All five were nominated Tuesday for the top prize of both the Directors Guild Awards and the Producers

Guild Awards, two of the most reliable Academy Awards bellwethers.

All but "1917," which took top honors Sunday at the Golden Globes, have been nominated by the industry's leading three guild awards.

The Screen Actors Guild earlier selected "Once Upon a Time .. in Hollywood," "Parasite," "The Irishman" and "Jojo Rabbit" for its biggest award, best ensemble.

Tuesday's rare confluence of announcements puts awards season into hyper speed. The Academy Awards moved up several weeks to Feb. 9 this year, squeezing the pre-Oscars calendar. The British Academy Film Awards also unveiled their nominations Tuesday, with "Joker" leading all films with 11 nods and an all-white acting field that immediately sparked criticism.

F. Zanuck Award.

Oscar prognosticators pay leading up to this." particular attention to the Producers Guild, which selects 10 movies for the year. Aside from the above five films, the producers also nominated "Joker," "Marriage Story," "Knives Out," "Little Women" and "Ford v Ferrari" for its annual top prize, the Darryl Lowe's favorite part of the

Rob Lowe brings his experience with 1st responders to Fox series

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)— Rob Lowe knows a little something about the vital roles of first responders, and he's bringing that to TV with his latest role.

He co-stars with Liv Tyler in "9-1-1: Lone Star" as a New York fire captain who relocates to Austin, Texas, to launch a firehouse from the ground up.

Lowe lives in Santa Barbara, California, which has endured wildfires and flooding in recent years. The actor has hosted and fed firefighters and police on his property.

"I was really interested in why these men and women do what they do, what does it mean to them, how do they go and sleep in the dirt for weeks on end if it comes to that and pull the kind of hours," Lowe told a TV critics meeting Tuesday. "It was fortuitous that I had that in my own life

Lowe said he already knew medical lingo from his time on "Code Black," a CBS series that aired from 2016-18. "9-1-1: Lone Star" marks his return to a starring role on U.S. TV for the first time in four years; it's Tyler's first network series.

new show is "it's the only

network procedural you'll see where the male hero is obsessed with men's skin care." There's a keto diet joke in the pilot (Lowe promotes the Atkins eating plan and has his own skin care line in real life).

Ryan Murphy ("Nip/ Tuck"), Brad Falchuk and Tim Minear co-created and co-executive produce the show.

"Let's face it, I'm not a stranger to looking in the mirror," Lowe said. "They knew how to write for me so any of that crazy stuff is probably coming from them knowing me as well as I know myself."

Murphy once wrote a role in "Nip/Tuck" for Lowe, but his agents never passed it onto the actor even though he loved the show.

"It's the humor, the weirdness, the randomness that we get to weave into this," Lowe said. "There's a lot of 'Nip/ Tuck' tone in this."

The series debuts Jan. 19 on Fox after the NFC championship game, with a second episode airing Jan. 20 in its regular time slot.

In preparation for the role, Lowe trained with a Los Angeles Fire Department unit near Dodger Stadium. But his famous face posed a problem with real-life victims.



The cast and crew of "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" pose in the press room with the awards for best motion picture, musical or comedy and best screenplay, motion picture, at the 77th annual Golden Globe Awards at the Beverly Hilton Hotel on Sunday, Jan. 5, 2020, in Beverly Hills, Calif.

Jason Biggs savors his lasting 'American Pie' connection

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)— Jason Biggs has no regrets about being indelibly linked to "American Pie," the rowdy 1999 adolescent sex comedy.

"It changed my life, and it's the reason I'm still here and

still in the game today," the actor said Tuesday.

Biggs, who played sexually naïve teen Jim in the movie, acknowledged the passage of time can be disconcerting. Biggs, 41, is the grown-up in the room now, playing a family man in Fox's new sitcom "Outmatched," debuting Jan. 23.

"I was the young dude in 'American Pie' and now I'm playing the dad to kids who were born after 'American Pie' came out. It is pretty surreal," he told a TV critics meeting.

Asked if he'd prefer later projects like "Outmatched" to eclipse his role in the teen movie, Biggs demurred.

"Do I hope that this erases anything? Certainly not, I just hope it adds to, and I'm really grateful to be here," he said.

Joining him for the panel discussion were Maggie Lawson, who stars as Biggs' wife,

and the youngsters who play their precocious offspring.

Biggs asked teenagers Connor Kalopsis and Ashley Boettcher whether they'd seen the movie (he hadn't, she had) and then turned his attention to grade-school-age Jack Stanton Jason Biggs, left, and Maggie Lawson, cast members in the upcoming television series "Outmatched," interact onstage during the 2020 FOX Television Critics Association Winter Press Tour, Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, in Pasadena, Calif.

and Oakley Bull.

"I hope you two have not," Biggs said, adding jokingly, "Maybe season three, we're going to have a fun viewing party."

"American Pie," the first in a franchise, was about four youths who make a pact to lose their virginity before the high school prom.

'Joker' tops nominations for British Academy film awards

LONDON (AP)—The film "Joker" has topped the nominations for the British Academy film awards announced Tuesday.

The movie about the origins of the comic book villain received 11 BAFTA nominations including best film, best actor for Joaquin Phoenix, and best director.

Martin Scorsese's gangster epic "The Irishman" and Quentin Tarantino's "Once Upon a Time in Hollywood" were close behind with 10 nominations each, including for best picture. Sam Mendes' war film "1917" also earned a best picture nomination two days after winning that award at the Golden Globes.

The Korean film "Parasite" also is on the best picture list.

In addition to Phoenix, the best actor nominees included Leonardo DiCaprio, Adam Driver, Taron Egerton and Jonathan Pryce.

The best leading actress will be chosen from among Scarlett Johansson, Saoirse Ronan, Charlize Theron, Renee Zellweger and Jessie Buckley.

BAFTA executives expressed dismay at the lack of diversity reflected in the nominations, which put only white actors up for the major acting prizes and have no women competing in the best director category.

"Being totally honest, we are disappointed, and that is not to take anything away from the people who have been nominated," British Academy Chief Executive Amanda Berry said.

The nominees in the majority of categories are selected in a vote by 6,500 BAFTA members around the world.

The winners will be announced at a Feb. 2 gala event hosted by comedian Graham Norton, a past BAFTA winner for his TV chat show.

Fox adding 'The Masked Dancer' to 'The Masked Singer'

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — "The Masked Singer" has been such a hit for Fox that the network is doubling down on hidden entertainers.

Fox said Tuesday that it is joining with Ellen De-Generes to produce "The Masked Dancer," a celebrity competition show based on "The Masked Singer" and a segment that DeGeneres originated on her talk show. Contestants will perform unique dances while covered from head to toe in elaborate costumes and face masks, leaving audiences to guess their identities

"This is gonna be just as fun and suspenseful as 'The Masked Singer,' with a lot more krumping," DeGeneres said in a statement, referring to a style of street dancing, "and I cannot wait!"

Meanwhile, Jamie Foxx will join "The Masked Sing-

er" as a guest panelist along with regulars Ken Jeong, Jenny McCarthy, Nicole Scherzinger and Robin Thicke and host Nick Cannon for the show's third season premiere on Feb. 2 after the Super Bowl.

The show will take its regu-

lar time slot on Feb. 5.

This season, 18 disguised celebrities will be split into three groups of six, and immediately be whittled down to three singers in each group. The final nine from all three groups will compete for the trophy.

Romance writers association calls off annual awards

3 plead guilty in case of Native American jewelry knockoffs

PHOENIX (AP) — Federal prosecutors say two retailers and a third person face up to five years in prison after pleading guilty in a conspiracy to import jewelry knockoffs made from the Philippines and then misrepresent the goods as made in the United States by Native Americans.

Laura Marye Wesley, 32,

pleaded guilty Monday in U.S. District court in Phoenix to conspiracy, wire fraud and other charges while Waleed Sarrar, 44, and Christian Coxon, 46, each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy, prosecutors said.

Wesley admitted having jewelry made in the Philippines and then arranging to have it smuggled into the United States and delivered to retail outlets in multiple states, the U.S. Department of Justice said in a statement.

Sarrar misrepresented imported jewelry as made by Native Americans at his store in Scottsdale, Arizona, while Coxon made similar false claims involving his store in San Antonio, Texas, the statement said.

NEW YORK (AP) — The Romance Writers of America has called off its annual awards as the organization remains in turmoil over allegations that it has failed to address criticism

In announcing the cancellation of the RITA Awards, the RWA noted that numerous authors and judges had dropped out. The Texasbased trade association has thousands of members.

for lack of diversity.

"The contest will not reflect the breadth and diversity of 2019 romance novels/novellas and thus will not be able to fulfill its purpose of recognizing excellence in the genre," according to a note posted this week on the RWA website. "For this reason, the Board has voted to cancel the contest for the current year. The plan is for next year's contest to celebrate 2019 and 2020 romances."

Romance author Racheline Maltese tweeted that the RWA had made a "good, responsible decision," but added "Let's be clear — the reason the RITAs would not have reflected the breadth and diversity of the genre is not due to marginalized authors withdrawing but due to actions by RWA that rendered such choices necessary."

During the holiday season, the RWA infuriated many in

the romance community by initially reprimanding author Courtney Milan for tweeting that Kathryn Lynn Davis' 1999 book "Somewhere Lies the Moon" was an "(expletive) racist mess." The association reversed its decision, but not in time to prevent an uproar that led to the resignation of President Carolyn Jewell and several board members.

"We have lost the trust of our membership and the romance community and we must find a way to rebuild that," the organization said in a statement last month. "We will strive to uphold the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion in all that we do."

Couple is target of ridicule for their healthy lifestyle

EAR ABBY: We need advice about how to respond to friends and family who poke fun or show disdain because of our healthy lifestyle. We are in our 60s. We rarely eat out, and when we do, we avoid fast food. We cook most of our meals with an emphasis on vegetables, fruits, fish and chicken. We exercise regularly and have occasional treats. We have no chronic illnesses and aren't on any medications.

For some reason, our food choices rub people the wrong way. If we are asked why we are in good health, we answer, "Over the years, we've learned not to consume foods or beverages that make us feel bad." If we're invited out to eat and order the baked salmon with broccoli instead of the burger and fries, we hear, "Your diet is so BORING." We usually laugh and shrug it off, but we don't think our diet is boring. We simply enjoy being healthy and know that food is "medicine." Should we continue to keep our mouths shut?

HEALTHY LIVING

DEAR HEALTHY: YEP! Your friends and family react the way they do because seeing you eat the way you do makes them feel self-conscious about their own food choices. Continue laughing and shrugging to age 100. The others may not be as fortunate as you.

DEAR ABBY: My girlfriend recently discovered that I am still talking to another girl I used to date. I'll call her Kyra.

Kyra and I had agreed we would remain strictly friends, and the breakup was before I started dating my current girlfriend, "Jan." Jan is devastated by this, and I can somewhat understand why. She got cheated on multiple times in her last relationship.

Do you think I was crossing a boundary by wanting to maintain the friendship with Kyra? Or should I have dropped it when I started dating Jan? I'm asking you because everyone I talk to agrees with me, and everyone Jan talks to agrees with her. I assume it's because people agree with whoever is telling the story. You are unbiased, and your opinion would be greatly appreciated.

DOING THE RIGHT THING IN UTAH

DEAR DOING: There's nothing wrong with remaining friends after a breakup. Jan is insecure because her last boyfriend cheated on her, and who can blame her? However, that is her problem, and you shouldn't make it yours. Your mistake was not telling Jan when you first started dating that you are still in touch with Kyra—and that she's a platonic friend, nothing more. Jan does not have the right to control your friendships, and you shouldn't let it happen.

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR ABBY: How do you cut off a person who talks constantly without a break? By the time there's a lull in her speech, I have forgotten what I wanted to add to the conversation.

WORD IN EDGEWISE IN PENNSYLVANIA

DEAR WORD: I have encountered compulsive talkers like her. They are exhausting. Remember, she has to breathe SOMETIME. The minute she starts to inhale, start talkin'!

Good advice for everyone – teens to seniors – is in "The Anger in All of Us and How to Deal With It." To order, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$8 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby, Anger Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

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Pastimes

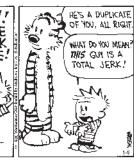
Calvin and Hobbes



OK, DUPE! HOBBES AND I ARE GOING OUT TO PLAY. YOU CLEAN MY ROOM, AND WHEN YOU'RE DONE, I'VE SOT SOME HOMEWORK YOU

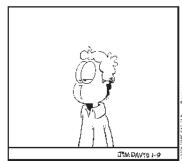






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Use your imagination, stir up interest in

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Don't

let the changes made by others ruin

your train of thought. Focus inward;

the adjustments necessary to reach your goal $\alpha \alpha \alpha$

doing what makes the most sense will encour-

age you to take the best care of your health and

well-being. Choose kindness and consideration

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STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955!** 99c per minute, touch tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Nina Dobrev, 31; Kate Middleton, 38; Dave Matthews, 53; Jimmy Page, 76

Happy Birthday: Put on your thinking cap, and start moving in a direction that brings you joy Consider your priorities and how best to accomplish what's likely to make you feel content, satisfied and accomplished. An unexpected opportunity will lead to a change of pace and location, and will encourage you to spend more time with those who share your interests and goals. Your numbers are 7, 11, 18, 24, 26, 33, 40.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): View the whole scenario before you decide to take action. There is much to consider if you don't want to make an enemy or cause a ruckus. You are best to put your energy into physical improvements and romantic gestures.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Do what's in your best interest. Whether it has to do with health, money or legal concerns, make decisions that suit you, not someone else. A change to the way or where you live will have a

positive impact on your life. GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Show everyone what you can do. Step up and display your skills, knowledge and experience. Positive change will be a direct result of what you do to convince others to support your actions and your goals. Romance is on the rise. OOO

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Emotions will be difficult to control. Accept the changes going on around you, and it will

be much easier to make the most out of whatever situation you face. In the end, whatever unfolds will be to your benefit. OOO

something that interests you. Participatpeople who share your concerns will spark your enthusiasm and encourage you to do more. A connection you make with someone will lead to

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): You can bring about change if you gather information and use it strategically to present

your plans and to garner support. Don't hesitate to set up a conference call or to use friendly persuasion to get others to pitch in and help.

do or say stand between you and your objective. Listen to criticism, but don't let it deter you from following through with your plans. 😂

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Take time out, and try your hand at something you've never done. Variety is the spice of life, and a little nudge in a different direction will motivate you to consider how best

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): ting up a budget that will help you stick to a life-

style you can afford will be the first step in reducing stress and taking control of your life. •••

Sudoku is a number-placing

puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with

several given numbers. The

object is to place the numbers

EUGENIA LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Sign up for

ing in events that will introduce you to an opportunity.

your ideas and present what you want to happen. Think big, show enthusiasm and focus on making

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Put your head down, and keep working hard until you reach your goal. Don't let what others

to use your time. **OOO**

Don't overlook your financial affairs. Know where every penny is going. Set-

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Home improvements should be an expression of how you want to live. Look at how your decisions will affect others and what you can do to ensure that in whatever transactions you make, no one close to you is left out. **OOOO

over upset and drama.

THE LAST WORD

IN ASTROLOGY

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Difficulty Level ★★★

1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

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Dit Saulty Level A & A

1709

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WONDERWORD OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY; All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally and even backward. Find them, circle each letter of the word and strike it off the list. The leftover letters spell the WONDELGWORD.

SAINT/TROPEZ, FRANCE Solution: 10 letters

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Arts, Beaches, Cafés, Camarat, Citadel, Coastal, Divide, Eglise, Ferry, Fish, France, French, Gendarme, Guy de Maupassant, Hockney, Jarlier, Jet, La Ponche, Lices, Marinas, Matisse, Mediterranean, Minibuses, Movies, Museums, Nautical, Place, Plage, Port, Resort, Riviera, Sail, Scuba, Seaside, Tahiti, Tarte, Tower, Vieux, Yachts, Ye-Ye Yesterday's Answer: Hashcash

The NEW Treasury 39 can be purchased online at www.WenderWordBooks.com, or call 1-800-642-6480.

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JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Employer: Kylie's Bakery, Chalan Pale Arnold Road, Gualo Rai, Saipan **Position:** Baker

Job Duties: Prepare, mix and bake ingredients to produce breads, rolls, cookies, cakes, pies, pastries or other baked goods.

- Roll dough in dough roller machine manually.
- Place dough in pans, molds, or on sheets and bake in production ovens manually.
- Place finished baked goods on a tray or plastic bags.
- Clean pans or molders after use.
- Prepare bread crumbs.
- Clean oven, mixer and dough roller machines after used.
- Prepare flour and other ingredients a day before production time (this includes lifting 20 lbs. or less of flour and other ingredients).
- Monitor supplies for replenishment.
- Clean production area all the time.
- · Clean, arrange and organize stocks.

Qualifications/Requirements: Graduation from High School or completion of a GED Program with one (1) year of skilled experience as a baker with skills in operating commercial mixers, commercial dough rollers and 24-tray commercial gas ovens. Incumbent must have or be able to obtain a CNMI food handler certificate.

Application can be made in person at Blue Spot Corporation, Satmonete Lane, Afetna Village, San Antonio or by telephone at 670-285-2253, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by mail to Blue Spot Corporation, P.O. Box 506343, Saipan, MP 96950 or by email to bluespotcorp@gmail.com.

Employer: Blue Spot Corp., Satmonete Ln, Afetna Village, San Antonio, Saipan MP 96950

Position: Mobile Heavy Equipment Mechanics, Except Engines **Job Duties:** Diagnose, adjust, repair, or overhaul mobile mechanical, hydraulic, and pneumatic equipment, such as cranes, bulldozers, graders, backhoes and other heavy equipment.

- Repair and replace damaged or worn parts.
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- Operate and inspect machines or heavy equipment to diagnose defects.
- Read and understand operating manuals, blueprints, and technical drawings.
 Dismantle and reassemble heavy equipment using hoists
- and hand tools.

 Perform routine maintenance on equipment and determine
- when and what kind of maintenance is needed.
 Watch gauges, dials, or other indicators to make sure a machine is working properly. Service, repair, adjust, and test machines, devices, moving parts, and equipment that operate primarily on the basis of mechanical (not electronic) principles.
- Calibrate using calibration machine.
- Supervise assigned mechanic.

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Carmelo hits game winner, Blazers top Raptors



Anthony made a clutch shot with four seconds remaining and Portland rallied to beat the Toronto Raptors 101-99 Tuesday night.

"A guy with his type of ability, it's just a matter of opportunity," Lillard said. "He had one guy guarding him and he got to his spot. Once he got to his spot and I saw him raising up, I thought it was going in."

Anthony scored 28 points, Lillard had 20 and Hassan Whiteside added 14 points and 16 rebounds for his sixth straight double-double as the Trail Blazers snapped a fourgame losing streak in Toronto and won for the second time in 10 meetings with the defending champion Raptors.

"This is a big confidence booster for us, a big morale boost," Anthony said.

Blazers coach Terry Stotts agreed.

"I was really proud of the way our team competed tonight, particularly in the fourth quarter," Stotts said. "At the end of the season, you look back on different games, and this could very well be a game that we look back on that turned the tide."

Portland had lost six of seven overall. The Blazers improved to 2-12 against opponents with winning records.

Anfernee Simons scored 12 points and C.J. McCollum had 10 after sitting out Sunday's loss in Miami because of an upper-respiratory infection.

The Blazers trailed 78-69 through three quarters, then fell behind 85-73 with 8:20 to go, but Lillard tied it at 99 on a 35-foot 3-pointer with 38 seconds left in the fourth, leading to a Raptors timeout.

Toronto coach Nick Nurse was adamant that Rondae Hollis-Jefferson had been the victim of an illegal screen by Whiteside on Lillard's deep 3.

"It was clearly, clearly an offensive foul on Whiteside that wiped us out to tie the game," Nurse said.

Toronto's Patrick McCaw turned it over with 13.6 seconds remaining, giving the Blazers a chance at a winning shot. With Lillard under wraps, McCollum took the inbounds pass and got the ball to Anthony, who connected from near the free throw line.

Kyle Lowry got one final chance for the Raptors, but his off-balance 3 bounced off the rim at the buzzer.

Portland connected on 12 of 19 attempts in the fourth, mak-



ing six shots from long range.

Lowry had 24 points and 10 rebounds, and Serge Ibaka added 17 points and 11 rebounds as the injury-ravaged Raptors lost for just the second time in 16 games against opponents with losing records. Toronto's only other loss to a sub-.500 team came against Boston in the second game of the season, when the Celtics were 0-1.

Oshae Brisett scored a career-high 12 points for Toronto and Chris Boucher also had 12, including 10 straight Raptors points in the fourth.

Raptors guard Fred Van-Vleet sat out because of a strained right hamstring, joining a group of injured Toronto starters that includes Norman Powell (left shoulder), Marc Gasol (left hamstring) and Pascal Siakam (groin).

Kings 114, Suns 103

In Phoenix, De'Aaron Fox scored 27 points, Nemanja Bjelica added 19 and Sacramento rallied from a 21-point deficit in the third quarter to beat the Suns

The Kings, who have won three of their last four, got big contributions from bench players Dewayne Dedmon and Trevor Ariza. Dedmon finished with 12 points and 10 rebounds and Ariza—who played for Phoenix part of last season—added 15 points.

The Suns were led by Devin Booker, who scored 34 points and had seven assists. It was Booker's seventh straight game with at least 30 points, which extends his franchise record.

Deandre Ayton added 21

points and nine rebounds. Kelly Oubre Jr. had 17 points.

Pistons 115, **Cavaliers 113**

In Cleveland, Derrick Rose hit a 15-footer with 27 seconds left and Detroit rallied past the Cavaliers.

Rose, who scored 24 points, scored on a runner in the lane to give Detroit a 114-113 lead and cap a comeback that began with the Pistons trailing 110-91 early in the fourth

Cleveland set up for a goahead shot, but Collin Sexton was called for stepping out of bounds with seven seconds left. The ruling was overturned, but Sexton's shot in the lane didn't hit the rim and Detroit was awarded possession on a shot-clock violation.

Andre Drummond finished with 23 points and 20 rebounds, the 38th time in his

> in both categories. Kevin Love matched a season high with 30 points, but Cleveland lost its fifth straight and went winless on its four-

> career he has hit the 20-mark

Thunder 111, Nets 103, OT

game homestand.

In New York, Chris Paul scored 20 of his 28 points in the fourth quarter and overtime, leading Oklahoma City past Brooklyn.

The game was tied at 103 before Paul made consecutive jumpers and the Nets never scored again. Shai Gilgeous-Alexander closed out the scoring with four free throws, after making a jumper to open OT.

Portland Trail Blazers forward Carmelo Anthony takes a long shot against the Toronto Raptors during the second half of an NBA game Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2020, in Toronto.

Gilgeous-Alexander added 22 points for the Thunder, who bounced back from a loss Monday in Philadelphia to win for the sixth time in seven games. Steven Adams had 10 points and 18 rebounds as Oklahoma City won without Danilo Gallinari, who rested a calf injury.

Grizzlies 119, Timberwolves 112

In Memphis, Dillon Brooks scored 28 points, Ja Morant added 25 and Memphis rallied in the fourth quarter for a victory over Minnesota.

Jaren Jackson Jr. finished with 21 points, including a trio of 3-pointers in fourth. Jae Crowder finished with 14 points and eight rebounds as Memphis won its third straight.

Rookie Jarrett Culver led the Timberwolves with a career-high 24 points, converting 8 of 11 shots, including 3 of 5 from outside the arc. Jeff Teague scored 18 points and handed out six assists for Minnesota, while Robert Covington scored 17 points. Andrew Wiggins had 15 points.

Lakers 117, Knicks 87

In Los Angeles, the Lakers gathered around Anthony Davis while the six-time All-Star writhed in pain on the Staples Center floor.

Another breezy blowout win had just become much less fun for the Lakers and their superstar big man, although it's too soon to say just how serious it will be for their championship dreams.

Davis left in the third quarter after bruising his lower back on a painful fall during the Lakers' sixth straight victory, 117-87 over the New York Knicks on Tuesday night.

Davis bruised his sacrum the bottom part of his spine above the tailbone—when he attempted to block Julius Randle's driving shot. He got knocked off balance and fell awkwardly to the court, landing hard on his back with 2:45 left in the third.

The Lakers were anxious as they surrounded him under the basket.

"Fingers crossed, hope for the best, pray for the best," coach Frank Vogel said.

Davis pounded the court in pain and stayed down for roughly two minutes, but eventually rose with his teammates' help and then slowly walked off unaided.

Zion now in full-court drills; Griffin out indefinitely METAIRIE, La. (AP)— out Wednesday night's game him to be out there, but it's a step Angeles Clippers on Jan. 18.

ished his first full-court, fiveon-five work since returning to practice last week, he spent extra one-on-one time with assistant coach Fred Vinson on the free throw line.

After all, the Pelicans are going to need Williamson to make free throws that matter sooner than later.

Coach Alvin Gentry wasn't ready to specify a date when Williamson will make his NBA regular season debutother than to virtually rule

When Zion Williamson fin- against Chicago—but did say by step process that we've got In Detroit, Pistons forward Williamson generally looked "fine" in practice.

> "Obviously conditioning is going to be the big thing there, but you know, you don't lose your feel for the game and he's a really good passer, a willing passer, so all of that stuff is going to be there," Gentry said. "You've got to get yourself in basketball shape, conditioning-wise, and that's going to be a process.

"He's eager to be out there and all of his teammates are eager for to take so that it's done the right way," Gentry addded. "There's no date, per se, but we're hoping that it's soon."

After the Pelicans host the Bulls, they hit the road for games at New York on Friday, Boston on Saturday and Detroit on Monday before returning home to play Utah on Jan. 16. If the Pelicans want Williamson to make his debut in New Orleans, that game could be a candidate, or the following game against the visiting Los

Blake Griffin is out indefinitely after having surgery on

his left knee. The Pistons announced Tuesday that Griffin will have an extended rehabilitation period with no timetable

for his return. Pistons coach Dwane Casey said before Tuesday night's game against the Cleveland Cavaliers that he hasn't been given any indication if Griffin will play again this season.

Garoppolo ready for 1st playoff start for 49ers



S A N T A CLARA, Calif. (AP)—Jimmy Garoppolo's postseason ex-

perience consists of a couple of garbage-time handoffs for New England during the 2014 AFC championship game that is remembered far more for the controversy surrounding deflated footballs.

Garoppolo will carry a much bigger burden when he makes his first career playoff start for San Francisco as the 49ers host the Minnesota Vikings on Saturday in their first playoff game since the 2013 season.

"I've seen the atmosphere in the building ramp up, the atmosphere of the coaches and players and everyone," Garoppolo said Tuesday about the lessons he learned during his time with the Patriots. "Just a lot more energy in the building for sure."

Garoppolo's first full season as a starting quarterback in the NFL was a success as he helped lead the Niners (13-3) to the playoffs for the first time in six years, earning the top seed in the NFC.

He had highs and lows, with Garoppolo's 18 turnovers being the most by any playoff quarterback but his four fourth-quarter comebacks tying for the most in the NFL.

In all, the good outshone the bad moments. Garoppolo posted three games with four TD passes and ranked third in the league with 8.4 yards per attempt.

That performance helped justify the commitment San

Francisco made to him following his 5-0 finish to the 2017 season after a midseason trade from New England.

The Niners rewarded Garoppolo with a five-year, \$137.5 million contract in the hopes that he would lead the team back to the playoffs and then shine on the big stage.

"He's been the same guy since he's been here since Day 1," tackle Joe Staley said. "He's going to try to be the most prepared person he can be. He'll practice the same way every day. He's not going to try to reinvent anything. He's not going to try to do anything different. He's going to be the same person for this franchise that he's been."

The first season of the deal was hardly a success. He threw three interceptions in a season-opening loss to the Vikings and then suffered a season-ending knee injury in a Week 3 loss at Kansas City.

That injury contributed to coach Kyle Shanahan's reluctance to put too much on Garoppolo's plate early this season, relying more on a dominant defense and running game.

But as the defense regressed in the second half of the season and opposing defenses focused on shutting down the running game, Garoppolo showed the ability to carry a much heavier load.

He had a pair of four-touchdown games against Arizona, had a mostly flawless primetime performance against Green Bay, led the fourthquarter comeback in a 48-46 win at New Orleans and beat the Seahawks on the road in



San Francisco 49ers quarterback Jimmy Garoppolo (10) passes the ball as he is pressured by Green Bay Packers linebacker Kyler Fackrell (51) during the first half of an NFL game in Santa Clara, Calif., Sunday, Nov. 24, 2019.

the season finale to clinch the division and top seed.

Now the Niners are counting on Garoppolo to deliver in the postseason.

"I thought last week was a playoff game," Shanahan said. "That was pretty intense when we played Seattle. He's shown he can handle himself with poise. ... I think Jimmy has played some pretty big games. Anyone who's around him in those games and talks to him, it's not much different in those games than it is in a preseason game."

Garoppolo has more playoff experience than most of his teammates, having served as Tom Brady's backup in New England in Super Bowlwinning runs in the 2014 and '16 seasons.

But the only time he made it on the field came in the closing minutes of the 2014 AFC championship game against Indianapolis, when he handed off twice in a 45-7 win. Brady was later suspended four games when the NFL said he directed equipment staffers to deflate footballs to make them easier to grip.

Receiver Emmanuel Sanders, who has played in Super Bowls for Pittsburgh and Denver, said the key in the playoffs is sticking to the same formula that got teams there.

"I don't have to talk to Jimmy about that," Sanders said. "How many Super Bowl rings does that guy got? He knows. He knows what it takes to go all the way and win it all. He's seen the preparation of one of the great quarterbacks of all-time. At the end of the day he understands the process."

Suddenly, the old guard looks rather old.

Tom Brady, who wants to keep playing next season at age 43, was overshadowed on wild-card weekend by a QB who threw for just 72 yards.

Drew Brees, who turns 41 this month, followed up what might have been his best season ever with a dud that featured his first multiple-turnover game of the season on a day he wasn't even the best QB on his own team.

Now, Brady and Brees join fellow graybeards Eli Manning, Phillip Rivers and Ben Roethlisberger as spectators to these playoffs, which feature the likes of greenhorns Patrick Mahomes, Lamar Jackson, Deshaun Watson and Jimmy Garoppolo.

The Patriots' 20-13 loss to the Tennessee Titans at Gillette Stadium marked New England's earliest exit from the playoffs in a decade.

Only twice in Brady's two decades in New England has his season ended earlier. In

Brady, Brees exit early in changing of QB guard

2002, he missed the playoffs at 9-7 and in 2008 he blew out a knee in the opener and watched the Patriots miss out again despite going 11-5.

Without his usual weaponry on offense, Brady faded down the stretch. The defending Super Bowl champs looked unbeatable over the season's first half, dominating opponents whom they outscored 250-61 through eight games.

That all changed beginning with a 37-20 loss to Jackson and the Ravens on Oct. 27 in Baltimore. From that point on, the Patriots won just four of nine games and were outscored 184-183.

It was during one of those early-season blowouts that Patriots coach Bill Belichick exploited another loophole in the NFL rule book that came back to haunt him in the playoffs.

Belichick realized he could just eat up game clock with

a series of delay-of-game or false-start penalties prior to a punt and oddly he exposed this loophole late in a 33-0 blowout of the Jets on Oct. 21.

"It was just the way the rules are set up," Belichick said after that game. "We were able to run quite a bit of time off the clock without really having to do anything. It's a loophole that'll be closed and probably should be closed. But right now, it's open."

While Belichick was smirking on the sideline when he was the one doing it to the Jets, he was furious Saturday night and yelled at the officials when Titans coach Mike Vrabel employed that same strategy—and at a much more opportune time.

Tennessee was ahead 14-13 when Vrabel had the Titans run nearly two minutes off the clock before punting the ball to New England with four minutes left. The Patriots went

three-and-out and didn't get the ball back until 15 seconds remained, still down by one.

Brees completed 26 of 33 passes for 208 yards but he threw a costly interception

Brady forced a pass that was intercepted and returned for a touchdown, sealing the loss in what could be Brady's final game for New England if he decides to play elsewhere in 2020.

"We've talked about this," Belichick said afterward. "It's the same thing we've talked about before. It's the same. Nothing's changed."

Except that he was the one who paid the price.

Brady finished with a 59.1 passer rating, throwing for 209 yards with no touchdowns and an interception. His counterpart, Ryan Tannehill, only completed 8 of 15 passes for 72 yards but one of those was for a touchdown and another was a 22-yarder to Derrick Henry, who also rushed for 182 yards.

In New Orleans on Sunday,

Brees completed 26 of 33 passes for 208 yards but he threw a costly interception that led to a Vikings touchdown and committed his first fumble of the season on one of his three sacks. The Saints had set an NFL mark with just eight turnovers in the regular season.

Brees was outplayed not only by Minnesota's Kirk Cousins but also by his own teammate, do-everything backup Taysom Hill, who became the first player in the playoffs with 25 or more yards rushing, receiving and passing.

Hill's 50 yards rushing on four carries led the Saints, who got just 21 yards rushing from Alvin Kamara. Hill also threw a 50-yard pass and had two receptions for 25 yards, including a 20-yard touchdown.

(Wondering if Jerry Jones asked Mike McCarthy about the Packers cutting

Hill in 2017 after the former Brigham Young star first flashed his skills in Green Bay that summer).

The Patriots and Saints were considered the most dangerous lower seeds in their respective conferences but neither could get out of the wild-card round.

The Patriots saw their three-year run to the Super Bowl end—along with their eight consecutive appearances in the conference championship—and the Saints lost on the final play for the third consecutive year.

Two years ago, it was on the Minneapolis Miracle and last year it was in overtime to the Rams after the infamous non-call on a blatant pass interference, which led to a rules change in 2019.

This time, it was on a tight end Kyle Rudolph's touchdown grab in overtime that gave Minnesota a 26-20 win moments after Cousins hit Adam Thielen for 43 yards to the Saints 2-yard line.

Red Sox allegedly steal signs in 2018 season



BOSTON—
The Boston
Red Sox are

the latest Major League Baseball team to be embroiled in a sign-stealing scandal. The Red Sox are alleged to have used the video replay room to steal opponent's signs during the 2018 season, according to Ken Rosenthal and Evan Drellich of The Athletic.

The team sent players to the video replay room—which is usually housed near the dugout—to study signs and relay information back to their teammates, according to three people with the Red Sox during the 2018 season. While this practice wasn't uncommon around the league, MLB cracked down on it prior to the 2018 season, sending out memos strictly forbidding players from using the video replay room to steal signs.

The Red Sox's method for relaying those signs to hitters wasn't as loud or obvious as the Houston Astros' tactic of banging on a trash can. The Red Sox were more subtle when relaying information.

Typically, the player who stole the signs would then walk back to the dugout to inform their teammates. Once runners got on base, they would pass along the signs based on their position on the base, according to The Athletic.

This wasn't the only method the team used. Red Sox hitters reportedly discussed their communication methods before each game.

Curiously, the three members of the Red Sox who spoke to The Athletic claimed the team could not use that sign-stealing method during the 2018 postseason. The Red Sox went on to win the World Series that season.

MLB commissioner Rob Manfred said on Tuesday that it will investigate the al-



legations "with the same thoroughness and vigor that we did Houston."

The three-month Astros investigation, characterized by Manfred as "probably the most thorough investigation that the commissioner's office has ever undertaken," reportedly included interviews with 60 people, the acquisition of more than 70,000 emails and the seizure of some club employees' phones.

The Red Sox released a statement Tuesday saying the team was unaware of the sign stealing, and will cooperate with MLB's investigation.

The explosion of technology has made it much easier

for teams to steal signs. While there was plenty of uncertainty from the league on whether this was acceptable initially, MLB has cracked down in recent years. On top of telling teams not to use the video replay room to relay signs, MLB started sending employees to monitor the replay room in each park.

This tactic wasn't always effective, as those employees didn't always stay in the room 100 percent of the time. The MLB employees were also inconsistent in their actions. Some monitors would allow teams to get away with whispering or relaying signs. Others were strict and would

report teams for everything.

MLB realizes this is a problem. In order to curb sign stealing, the league is working to develop technology that would encode pitcher-catcher communication, reported Hannah Keyser of Yahoo Sports. The methods proposed by MLB—including earpieces or a series of lights on the mound—would completely eliminate the need for visible signs, thus making it harder for teams to cheat.

Until MLB can perfect that technology, the league is stuck with its current system. While MLB has gotten more serious about preventing sign stealing, the league apparently hasn't done enough to discourage teams from using technology to get an edge.

Given the amount of teams that have benefited from the practice, the league will have to find better ways to prevent teams from skirting the rules. That won't stop clubs from coming up with new ways to cheat, but at least MLB can make teams work harder to get ahead.

'Punishment' on Astros out soon

It appears that the investigation into the Houston Astros 2017 sign-stealing controversy is drawing to a close. According to ESPN's Jeff Passan, In this Oct. 26, 2018 file photo, Boston Red Sox manager Alex Cora, right, watches pregame activities before Game 3 of the World Series baseball game against the Los Angeles Dodgers in Los Angeles.

commissioner Rob Manfred is expected to decide on the Astros' punishment sometime in the next several weeks.

MLB began its investigation into the Astros in November, shortly after former Astros pitcher Mike Fiers revealed to the Athletic that the team had enacted a sign-stealing scheme during the 2017 season. It was allegedly set up by two players and involved a center field camera at Minute Maid Park and a system of trash can lid bangs to alert the batter as to what pitch was coming. As part of the investigation, MLB conducted interviews, examined video and sifted through over 75,000 emails and instant messages.

"Punishment" encompasses a number of things, all of which Manfred needs to figure out. There's team punishment, which would be a large fine (Passan suggested it could be the largest ever levied against a baseball team) and perhaps the loss of draft picks for 2020 and beyond. Then there's the punishment of the individuals involved, such as players, coaches, employees and front office executives, which could possibly include suspensions and fines.

Despite the allegation that the sign stealing system was hatched by two players, Passan reported that MLB is not expected to discipline any players, only coaches, employees and executives. That could include GM Jeff Luhnow, manager AJ Hinch, former bench coach (and current Boston Red Sox manager) Alex Cora and others.



NEW YORK— Brooks Koepka edged Rory McIlroy in a tight race for 2019 PGA

Tour Player of the Year honors as voted on by members of the Golf Writers Association of America.

McIlroy beat Koepka for the same honor by an undisclosed vote total from his PGA Tour peers back in September, but in this vote the nod went to the current world No. 1 as Koepka received 44 percent of the votes against McIlroy's 36 percent, with Masters champ Tiger Woods finishing third.

While the Tour's vote encompassed the 2018-19 season, during which both Koepka and McIlroy won three times, the GWAA vote was

Koepka edges McIlroy for Player of the Year honors

for the calendar year of 2019 when McIlroy won four times to Koepka's two victories. But one of Koepka's wins came at the PGA Championship, and he compiled a historic run in the majors by finishing T-4 or better in all four events. He becomes the first player to win the GWAA Player of the Year award in consecutive seasons since Woods won three in a row from 2005-07.

Koepka is set to return to action next week, marking his first start since re-aggravating a knee injury that kept him out of the Presidents Cup.

Koepka will play next week in the Abu Dhabi HSBC Championship on the European Tour and is slated to participate in a six-player, pretournament exhibition on Jan. 14. He had previously committed to participate in the Saudi International, held at the end of January.

Koepka underwent a stem cell procedure in the offseason to repair a partially torn patella tendon in his left knee, and he made his season debut at the Shriners Hospitals for Children Open in October. But he missed the cut in Las Vegas, then withdrew from his title defense at the CJ Cup after slipping on a concrete bridge during the second round and re-aggravating the injury. He hasn't played competitively since and was replaced by Rickie Fowler on the U.S.

Presidents Cup team.

Koepka has also formally committed to two PGA Tour events next month: the Genesis Invitational, held Feb. 13-16, and the Feb. 27-March 1 Honda Classic. Koepka missed the cut at Riviera in 2017 in his lone prior appearance, while the West Palm Beach native has been a regular at PGA National and last year finished one shot behind winner Keith Mitchell.

Meanwhile, McIlroy will play his first event of 2020 at the Farmers Insurance Open at Torrey Pines in California later this month, organisers confirmed on Monday.

The Northern Irishman and reigning PGA Tour Player of

the Year returns to the oceanside course outside San Diego after finishing fifth in the tournament in 2019.

The 30-year-old will be aiming to build on a solid showing in his most recent event, a fourth place at the DP World Tour Championship in Dubai in November. Prior to that outing, McIlroy had scored a victory in the WGC-HSBC Champions tournament in Shanghai.

McIlroy enjoyed a superb 2019 season with wins in the Players Championship, RBC Canadian Open and Tour Championship.

His 18 USPGA Tour wins include four major championships, the 2011 US Open,

2012 and 2014 PGA Championship and 2014 British Open.

The January 23-26 tournament is set to feature a strong field with 2017 champion and world No. 3 Jon Rahm, defending champion Justin Rose, and reigning US Open champion Gary Woodland all playing the event.

In other awards, after winning four times including two majors, Jin Young Ko was a runaway winner for LPGA tour Player of the Year honors over Nelly Korda, while Charles Schwab Cup champ Scott McCarron edged Steve Stricker for the award on the PGA Tour Champions. All three winners will receive their awards at the GWAA's annual dinner in Augusta, Ga., on the eve of the opening round of the Masters.

Nadal insists Federer Slam record not on his mind

fael Nadal insisted Wednesday he isn't focused on matching Roger Federer's record Glam Slam haul at the Australian Open this month.

The 33-year-old last year won the French and US Open titles to move within one of his Swiss rival's record tally of 20.

Federer has sat on top of the all-time list since 2009 when he passed Pete Sampras' benchmark of 14 after winning a five-set thriller over Andy Roddick at Wimbledon.

A Nadal triumph in Melbourne could set the stage for him to set a new landmark at Roland Garros, where he will start hot favourite to add to his 12 French Open titles.

But the Spaniard downplayed the potential historical implications after steering Spain into the ATP Cup quarterfinals.

"I honestly don't think much (about Federer's record)," Nadal said. "My only goal is to keep playing good tennis, keep enjoying this sport and being happy. And if



that happens and I stay healthy then the goal is to keep producing chances in the events that I'm going to play."

Nadal's immediate focus is leading Spain's title charge at the inaugural ATP Cup.

Unbeaten Spain qualified for the knockout stages in Sydney after sweeping Japan in Group B in Perth with Nadal tie in Perth's warm conditions.

yet to drop a set from his three matches.

The 19-time Grand Slam winner,

SONICS

however, was pushed by inform world number 72 Yoshihito Nishioka before prevailing 7-6 (7/4), 6-4 in two hours

also got a lot of support from

their teammates en route to

their 15-point winning margin.

Four other Sonics players con-

tributed at least two field goals

apiece, while five more made

The Ol'Aces 3 did not have

as many offensive options as the Sonics with only Craig

Padayao and Anton Ogumoro

consistently hitting their shots

in the squad's last game. Pa-

dayao logged 16 points, while

Ogumoro added 13. Airson

Atan chipped in 8, while the

Ol'Aces 3 were held to one

In the other game in the

division last Sunday, Rollers

2's offensive firepower also

proved too much for Rollers 3.

16, and John Paul Cruz and

Darren Pangelinan recorded 11

his total output in the first half,

including 11 straight points ear-

ly in that period that ended with

Rollers 2 way ahead, 43-14.

Koby Mizutani led Rollers 2's attack with his 21 points,

field goal apiece.

it to the team's box scores.

and seven minutes.

Nadal made 36 unforced errors and appeared weary at times in Spain's first day session

"It was the first experience with the heat here in Australia, so we played

under heavy conditions and it was tough," he said. "I played against a player who has started the season on fire, so it was

half despite the big lead to

Rafael Nadal of Spain plays a backhand against Japan's Yoshihito Nishioka during their ATP Cup tennis match in Perth, Australia, Wednesday, Jan. 8,

an important victory for me and the team."

Wild-card entry for Sharapova

Meanwhile, former world No. 1 Maria Sharapova will be awarded a wildcard to play at this month's Australian Open.

The 32-year-old Russian is currently ranked 147th in the world after a season in which a long-standing shoulder injury restricted her to eight tournaments.

Sharapova played her first match since losing in the first round of last year's US Open at the Brisbane International on Tuesday but was defeated 3-6, 6-1, 7-6(3) by American qualifier Jennifer Bradv.

Australian Open tournament director Craig Tiley confirmed this morning that the 2008 champion will receive a wildcard entry into the main singles draw for the tournament, which starts in Melbourne on Jan 20.

The five-time Grand Slam champion has been troubled by shoulder problems throughout her career and underwent surgery early last year, with lingering problems hampering her throughout the 2019 season.

CNMI

BLUE

From Page 28

minutes of play.

From Page 28

last run with the help of Songao's single at the top of the seventh inning.

At the bottom of the last inning, Guam had a chance to score when Isaiah Nauta reached third off the CNMI's error with two outs. However, he was left stranded and the

players finished in twin digits

in the victory with Manolo

Manalo and Jaymark De Guz-

man adding 12 points each

and Ron Esmores contribut-

ing 11. Esmores made 9 of his

total points in the first period,

while Schmidt chipped in 8

for their 17-point lead after 10

Schmidt then drilled 10

game ended when Nakamura struck out Gavin Lim.

Guam had a scoring opportunity earlier at the bottom of the second inning with runners on second and third base. However, a big defensive stop from the CNMI—a double play—frustrated the host.

Interestingly, Guam did not field its pro players—Peter Perez and Sean Cruz-in

yesterday's match, but both are expected to suit up for the squad today when it collides with the CNMI anew for the first finals berth.

Kosrae (1-2) and Pohnpei (0-3) will meet in the other playoff match today at 10am with the winner facing the loser of the CNMI-Guam game tomorrow for the last

Saipan Vegas cut the deficit to 5 at the break, 28-33, behind the 11 points of Celio Bisana in the second period. 61-46, after making 14 markers in that frame.

quarters was enough for Old Iskool to withstand Saipan Vegas' rally in the final canto.

Blue Eagle 89—Schmidt 26, Manalo 12, De Guzman 12, Esmores 11, Barbo 8, Santos 8, Talania 2, Arcon 2, Si-

Jugos 15, Lifoifoi 12, Sablan

47-37, 70-57, 89-78.

Masters Division

Old Iskool 85—Pangelinan 20, De Guzman 12, Cosino 9, Montano 8, Abuy 7, Camacho 7, Pablo 7, Manabat 4, Bartolo 2, Borja 2.

Saipan Vegas 79—Bisana

Scoring by quarters: 23-8, 33-25, 61-46, 85-79.

complete its domination in the last elimination round game.

First Game

Sonics 60—Itaas 17, Manalo 16, Bravo 6, Ferrari 4, A. Ordona 4, Bernardo 4, Rizo 3, Cadag 3, R. Ordona 2, Elchico 2, Carvana 2.

Ol'Aces 3 45—Padayao 16, Ogumoro 13, Atan 8, Kapwich 3, Kaipat 3, Ermitanio 2, Scoring by halves: 28-23,

Second Game

Rollers 2 76—Mizutani 21, Palmes 16, Pangelinan 11, Pelisamen 5, Richards 5, Toves 4, Tudela 2.

Rollers 3 33—Laitan 9, Balicante 8, Mamis 8, Castro 6, Factor 2.

Scoring by quarters: 43-14, 76-33.



ROSELYN B MONBOYO

A Rollers 2 player, right, looks for his teammates, while an Ol'Aces 1 defender stays close to him during their game in the boys U18 division of the 2019 TanHoldings Christmas Basketball at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium. Both the Ol'Aces 1 and Rollers 2 made it to the semifinals of the tournament.

markers in the second period to help the Blue Eagle survive the 17-point explosion of

OFO STAI		uJ											
Masters Division													
TEAMS	W	L											
Blue Haus	4	0											
Saimar Pilots	3	0											
JNS	4	1											
Islander	3	1											
Old Iskool	4 3 3	1											
IT&E	1	2											
Gilas Batang	1	2											
Pacific Marine	1	4											
PPG Paint	0	4											
Saipan Vegas	0	5											
, ,													
Open Division													
Blue Eagle	4	0											
Eats Easy	4	1											
Hoopaholics	4 3 2	1											
Islander	2	1											
RNV	2	2											
I aliano	4	0											

Pacific Island Club

UFO STANDINGS

Lakay Shirley's AK Toyota Saipan Vegas Duenas in that quarter, which wrapped up with the eventual winning team still up by dou-

ble figures, 47-37. The Blue Eagle went on to maintain its safe distance over Shirley's in the second half with Demapan and Manalo stepping up and Darwin Barbo and Edwin Santos also hitting a couple of baskets. Barbo and Santos had 6 points apiece in the second half.

Duenas, after a strong showing in the second period, went cold at the start of the second half, as he was limited to one field goal in the third period. He then scored 9 in the final quarter, but lacked support, as Shirley's played against the Blue Eagle with a depleted roster.

Meanwhile, Old Iskool got win No. 3 out of four matches after downing the winless Saipan Vegas, 85-79, in the Masters Division.

Old Iskool also leaned on a good start to gain enough cushion and thwart Saipan Vegas' repeated comeback bids.

Old Iskool built a 23-8 advantage after the opening quarter with Jorge De Guzman scoring 6 points and Bryan Manabat and Bernard Montano adding 4 apiece.

From Page 28 17 and Manalo chipping in 16. The two Sonics gunners

However, Ed Pangelinan brought the lead back to double figures in the third period,

The 15-point lead after three

Open Division

Shirley's 78—Duenas 29, 11, Aranda 6.

Scoring by quarters: 24-7,

23, Usi 14, Park 8, Moises 7, Cortez 7, Maplas 5, Backe 4, Guo 2, Barreto 2.

> Rollers 2 then kept pouncing on Rollers 3 in the second



28 THURSDAY, JA

Carmelo hits game winner, **Blazers top Raptors**

9, 2020

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Garoppolo ready for 1st playoff start for 49ers

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

A.J. Lizama put the CNMI

on the board at the top of the first inning with his single driving leadoff batter Virgil Sechar-

midal home. A.J. Lizama then broke the team's four-inning

silence when he reached at the

top of the sixth off Guam's error. Dennis Cabrera also scored

from Guam's miscue for the

CNMI's 3-0 lead.

CNMI shuts down Guam

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com REPORTER

he CNMI swept the preliminary games in the 3rd Micronesian Baseball Classic after blanking host Guam, 5-0, yesterday at the Paseo Stadium in Agana.



Muna and Harry Nakamura pitched for the Com-

monwealth, giving up only five hits in the shutout victory that handed their squad a 3-0 record and the momentum it needed, as the CNMI faces Guam anew today at 2pm with the first finals berth at stake.

While Muna and Nakamura did a good job hurling for the CNMI, A.J. Lizama and Darion Jones led the team's offense. Lizama went 2-for-

ROSELYN B. MONROYO

A.J. Lizama, seen here getting ready at bat in a local league late last year, scored two runs and two RBIs in the CNMI's 5-0 win over Guam in the 3rd Micronesian Baseball Classic yesterday at the Paseo Stadium

getting one RBI.

A.J. Lizama then made it a 4-0 advantage with his single 3 at bat and scored two runs bringing in leadoff batter Henand two RBIs, while Jones was perfect at the plate, gory Lizama, while the former handed the CNMI its fifth and ing 2-for-2. Fred Songao also helped after hitting 2-for-4 and

See CNMI on Page 27



Blue Eagle's Bart Demapan unloads an open layup during an earlier game against Saipan Vegas in the Open Division of the United Filipino Organization IT&E 2019 Basketball League at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Blue Eagle soars to fourth win

n_monroyo@saipantribune.com REPORTER

The Blue Eagle kept its perfect record in the Open Division of the Open Division the United Filipino IT&E

2019 Basketball League following an 89-78 victory over Shirley's Coffee Shop last Saturday at the Gilbert

C. Ada Gymnasium. Douglas Schmidt scored 26 points in the victoryShirley's absorbed its third loss after four matches. The Blue Eagle jumped to a 24-7 lead in the first quarter

fourth in as many games.

threatened to comeback in the second period behind Matt Duenas' hot hands, Schmidt and company hung on to keep their

and though Shirley's

record clean. Three other Blue Eagle

Sonics lead Final Four cast

The boys U18 competition in the 2019 Tan-Holdings Christmas Basketball is down to the Final Four with the 670 Sonics leading the semifinalists in the division after sweeping the elimination round. The Sonics whipped the

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com

Ol'Aces 3, 60-45, last Sunday at the Gillette Multipurpose Gymnasium to finish the round-robin elimination with a field-best 7-0 record. The Rollers 2 also played last Sunday and eased past the Rollers 3, 76-33, to join the No. 1 seed Sonics in the semifinals, as the former ended up with a 4-3 mark. The Rollers 2 and Sonics will collide this Saturday at 5pm for the first finals berth, while the other semis game at 7pm will have No. 2 seed Ol'Aces 1 (6-1) taking on No. 3 Rollers 1 (5-2).

The Rollers 3 was booted



out after failing to win a single game in the short tournament, while CTSI (2-5) and the Ol'Aces 2 (2-5) and 3 (1-6) also missed the playoffs.

The Sonics defeated the Ol'Aces 3 and completed the elimination round sweep after drawing steady offensive games from Khristian Itaas and Jadeial Manalo. The Sonics' 1-2 punch delivered double figures with Itaas making

See SONICS on Page 27

See BLUE on Page 27 which was the Blue Eagle's